

'I thought, for a surreal moment, that William Hague had got married again. There he was, leading a blonde woman out of a register office, both of them wearing the kind of embarrassed smiles which are usually confined to a wedding album.'

Joan Smith on Mr and Mrs Hague

THE BEST-WRITTEN SUNDAY PAPER IN BRITAIN, FEATURING DAVID THOMSON, JEREMY CLARKE, PETER YORK, JEREMY PAXMAN, AN WILSON
JOAN SMITH, GILBERT ADAIR, MICHAEL BYWATER, DEAR ANNIE, ALAN WATKINS, CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT AND WALLACE ARNOLD

Furore over tax on child benefit

THE CHANCELLOR is facing a battle with Treasury colleagues and backbench MPs over his plans to raise child benefit but tax it for better-off couples.

Dawn Primarolo, the Paymaster General, has told colleagues she is opposed to child benefit being taxed and Labour MPs are lining up to attack Gordon Brown if he goes ahead with taxing it in his Budget on 9 March. Mr Brown raised child benefit by £2.50 above inflation in his last Budget. The increase will take effect from next April at a cost of £875m but he gave a clear signal that he would be drawing up plans to tax it.

The Chancellor is believed to be intent on taxing the benefit with an increase to soften the blow, but he is under intense pressure to abandon the plan.

Former Social Security minister Frank Field has warned it would be difficult to gain any savings by taxing the benefit because of the move to separate taxation for men and women.

Ministers and Labour MPs, who privately were discussing the Budget this week, are opposed to taxing child benefit because it would undermine its value as a universal benefit. The Tories are also prepared to fight for child benefit, and are ready to accuse Mr Brown of attacking the middle classes.

In a speech yesterday, the Chancellor gave the strongest hint so far that he intends to boost the value of child benefit to make the family one of the main themes of the Budget. "It is because we are determined

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

to continue our tough approach on public finances that the Budget will ensure we stay on track to meet our prudent fiscal rules and lay the foundations for a strong economy which supports enterprise, work and families," Mr Brown said.

The 20 per cent increase in the £11.05-a-week rate of child benefit for the first child will come as a boost to families within weeks of the Budget. It is likely to be taxed for top rate taxpayers, but there will be complications in taxing wealthy unmarried couples where the woman is not working, or is in low-paid employment.

The Chancellor is understood to be planning a radical package of reforms, including the abolition of mortgage interest tax relief (Miras). Labour MPs said this week's half per cent cut in interest rates made it more likely that Miras could be scrapped without protests from home owners.

The star item in the Chancellor's Budget box is expected to be a cut in taxes for the low est paid, with the introduction of the promised 10p rate of income tax, which could take many low-paid people out of tax altogether.

The move could cost £7bn but abolishing Miras would save over £2bn and the Chancellor is believed to have sufficient sums to cover the additional cost of the tax cuts.



Elvis alias Leyton Somers putting up the for sale sign on Elvisy Yours, his shop-shrine to Presley which is moving to the Trocadero at Piccadilly Circus in central London after 17 years in Shoreditch in the East End
Kalphesh Lathigra

Condon 'may not survive Lawrence report'

MINISTERS BELIEVE that the pressure on Sir Paul Condon following the findings of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry may be too great for him to remain as Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

Although Sir Paul is not expected to be named personally in the inquiry report, which is due to be published later this month, there will be criticism of officers in his force investigation and ministers think the pressure may become too great for him to stay.

"We would think that senior heads will roll as a result of the inquiry's findings," a Home Office source said. "The feeling

BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

is that there should be a clear break. This is a chance to change race relations for good in this country to ensure that something like this cannot ever happen again."

Sir Paul, who is due to retire next January, has made it a point of honour to promise that if the report, by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, turned out to criticise him personally he would go.

"I have never run away from a challenge in my life. I believe that although it is going to be a painful time for us over the

next few months I should have the courage to see through those reforms that will no doubt come out of the inquiry," Sir Paul has said.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, will also use the results of the inquiry as a benchmark for a radical shake-up of race relations in the police.

Ministers are already reviewing the Race Relations Act in the light of the report, which is also expected to accuse the Metropolitan and other police forces of "institutional racism."

The Home Secretary is considering recommendations made by the Commission for

Racial Equality last year which would simplify the complaints procedure against individual police officers.

To make it easier to prove police misconduct on racial grounds, under the new Act, police officers' guilt would only have to be proven on the balance of probabilities.

At present, disciplinary proceedings are more difficult to succeed because their guilt has to be proven beyond reasonable doubt.

It would also abolish a rule protecting police officers from disciplinary action if criminal proceedings on the same matter have failed.

Similarly, their right of silence would be removed and the Police Complaints Authority would have the power to conduct its own independent investigations.

While the Government will resist imposing quotas for ethnic minorities, police forces will have to monitor their employment and promotion and report annually on whether targets are being met.

Police officers could also be asked to attend race and community courses.

"This is a very sensitive issue and legislation on its own will not stop racism within the police. We need better educa-

tion on race issues to create a cultural change," the Home Office source said.

According to the source, the Government will reject the inquiry's criticism, as revealed in *The Independent*, of the Lawrence family's lawyers, Michael Mansfield and Imran Khan, for their role in the ill-fated private prosecution against the five white youths suspected of the murder.

Accountability within the Metropolitan Police is also set to be improved by the Greater London Authority Bill which will set up a new, democratically accountable Metropolitan Police Authority.

first direct

vo!

free banking

24 hours a day, Bob's your uncle!

0800 24 24 24
www.firstdirect.co.uk

Free banking means that there are no charges for cheque and cash machine withdrawals in the UK, standing orders and direct debits, switch payments or monthly statements. Applicants must be 18 or over. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Freeport, Leeds LS98 2HF. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. To maintain a quality service, calls may be monitored and/or recorded. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member: FSCB Group



FORECAST

General situation: A rather cold day across the country but particularly in Scotland where it will still be quite windy and there will be frequent showers. Many of the showers will be of snow by the end of the day. However, southern Scotland should catch some sunny breaks. England, Wales and Northern Ireland will have a lot of cloud and showers are likely. Some of the showers will be heavy and may merge to longer periods of rain. Over the mountains they will turn increasingly to sleet and snow.

London, SE & East: S England: Cold with isolated showers and only the odd bright spell. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 6-8°C (43-46°F).

Midlands, E Anglia, E England: Mostly cloudy with cold showers and longer periods of rain. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 6-7°C (43-45°F).

Wales, NW, West & N England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Heavy showers and spells of rain but some brighter spells in the east. The showers will turn increasingly wintry over the hills. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 4-7°C (39-45°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Aberdeen, W & N Isles: Very cold with sunny spells and showers, the showers increasingly of snow. A strong north-westerly wind. Max temp 3-6°C (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

SW & SE Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow: Scattered showers, mostly in the west, turning increasingly wintry. Better sunny spells in the east. A fresh to S-SE (37-43°F).

BRITAIN TODAY

LIGHTING UP

	5.12pm	to	8.03am
Belfast	5.02pm	to	7.40am
Bristol	5.09pm	to	7.39am
Glasgow	5.00pm	to	8.00am
London	4.58pm	to	7.30am
Manchester	5.01pm	to	7.44am
Newcastle	4.53pm	to	7.47am

HIGH TIDES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Avonmouth	10.36	12.0	10.53	11.4
Cardiff	9.09	4.1	9.27	3.5
Deerport	8.54	5.1	9.16	4.8
Dover	2.18	6.4	2.36	6.0
Don Langhorne	2.54	3.6	3.19	3.8
Falmouth	8.25	4.9	8.47	4.6
Glasgow	4.07	3.2	3.59	3.5
Haverth	3.03	3.7	3.27	3.6
Holyhead	1.41	5.0	1.54	5.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	9.48	7.9	9.57	8.2
King Lynn	8.58	5.8	9.56	6.0
Leith	6.13	5.0	6.35	5.3
Liverpool	2.30	8.6	2.46	8.6
Milford Haven	9.41	6.3	10.00	5.9
Newbury	8.36	6.3	8.56	6.0
Portsmouth	10.15	1.7	10.36	1.5
Portsmouth	2.46	4.4	2.52	4.2
Portsmouth	11.36	4.4	11.57	4.0
Scarborough	7.41	5.1	7.48	5.3
Wick	2.44	3.1	2.57	3.3

AIR QUALITY

Today's readings

	NO ₂	SO ₂
London	Good	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises: 07.32
Sun sets: 16.58
Moon rises: 23.35
Moon sets: 10.07
Last Quarter: Feb 5th

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts dial 0800 5069
followed by the two digits for your area.
Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at
50p per min (inc VAT)

RAIN OR SHINE...

IF YOU don't ask you don't get and in the United Arab Emirates a mass prayer for rain campaign called for by the Emiratis President, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, to end a punishing dry spell has ended with overcast skies and rain clouds appearing over Abu Dhabi.

Forecasters now hope the clouds will bring much-needed rain. Prayers were held in all the seven emirates earlier this week.

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

24 hours to 6pm (GMT) Thursday
Information by PM WeatherCentre

THE WORLD

EUROPE NOON TODAY

Key: Isobars: air — warm front — cold front — occluded front

High M will relax slowly southwards with Low T quickly filling and moving north-east.

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Key: Isobars: air — warm front — cold front — occluded front

High M will relax slowly southwards with Low T quickly filling and moving north-east.

Key: Isobars: air — warm front — cold front — occluded front

High M will relax slowly southwards with Low T quickly filling and moving north-east.

Key: Isobars: air — warm front — cold front — occluded front

'Plucky Little King' who earned the crown of peace in the Middle East

TO THE end, he was a king. Hussein ibn Talal had spoken of his own mortality many times, and his last journey yesterday - 6,000 miles from an American deathbed to the land he ruled for 46 years - became him. Soldiers prefer to die at home.

A military man, a field commander, Sandhurst graduate. King Hussein had the disconcerting habit when I first met him of calling me "Sir" - he used it with everyone, a gesture of respect that humbled the visitor (and was intended to).

That's why we called him the Plucky Little King, the PLK. Honour was the word that came to mind. He believed that if he trusted enough in another person, his good faith would be returned; he was cruelly rewarded.

Many of those who betrayed his hopes will come to his funeral. The Gulf rulers, for example, who never understood why he could not condemn Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990; the Israelis, who showed their respect for their peace treaty with King Hussein by sending a murder squad to Amman last year; Yasser Arafat, who allowed his Palestinian guerrillas to attempt a coup d'état in 1970 and lied to him about his secret deal with Israel in 1994; and the American president, who re-

BY ROBERT FISK
in Amman

prison, Shubailath delayed him 10 minutes while he said goodbye to his fellow inmates. Hussein waited patiently for him. Would Saddam (who prefers to string his prisoners up) have done that? Would King Fahd? Would President Mubarak? Would Benjamin Netanyahu? Perhaps it is this which distinguished the King: among the monsters of the Middle East, he appeared such a reasonable man.

He was also, in an odd way, a careless man. His folly at joining Egypt's war against Israel in 1967 was compounded in 1990 by his support for Saddam (who also betrayed the king - please God HE'S not at the funeral).

Hussein demonstrated an equal but more personal recklessness - hubris, perhaps? - when he rode in the cold, rain-lashed streets of Amman last week in an open-top car. After his first brush with cancer, I asked the King if he had been cured of his illness. "The doctors gave me an excellent bill of health," he replied - how painful those words sound now - and then I noticed the packet of cigarettes lying on the table in front of him. "Ah, yes," he said. "These are the only things I haven't yet given up." And he flicked his finger at the packet in disdain.

If his desire for peace showed vision, he lacked foresight. With their usual obsequiousness, Western as well as Arab leaders have been praising the King for returning to Jordan last week to fire his brother Hassan and create his eldest son crown prince.

"Setting his affairs in order" was what they called it. But even if we ignore the lack of any democratic process for the succession, it was a bit late in the day to start switching your crown prince around. The man who had cemented relationships with scores of kings and presidents - albeit not always impressive relationships - was suddenly replaced by a man who knew none of them. No wonder Jordanians fear the future.

For Prince Abdullah is going to have a spot of bother with the kings and presidents at that funeral. Mr Clinton, for example, will be keen to get the new monarch to set the Iraqi opposition up with hearth and home in Amman, perhaps even to risk a little military foray into Iraq to set up a "safe haven" for Saddam's enemies.

The Israelis would be smiling along with that idea. At which point Saddam would become a threat.

But refuse the United States president - which is what Jordanians would want him to do - and Abdullah may start his reign with an unsympathetic if not downright hostile Washington at his back. Threaten Saddam and the Americans will love him. Ignore Washington and his people will love him; it's the same old trap his father walked into in 1990.

But what Abdullah cannot be his father. If relations are breaking down between Egypt and Sudan, call King Hussein. If there's civil war in Lebanon, ask King Hussein's advice. When Arafat and Netanyahu cannot abide each other at the



King Hussein, credited by his subjects with protecting them from the country's powerful neighbours Gamma



A man in Amman praying yesterday for the monarch

Nation waits for the deluge

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Amman

"I AM so sad," said Saadi, tears streaming down his face as he lifted crates into a truck in central Amman. "He was such a good man." Five miles away Jordanian soldiers, hooded against the driving rain, were turning visitors away from the gates of a hospital where King Hussein lay dying.

Jordanians learnt the latest news about their king's condition by listening to foreign radio stations. Jordanian radio said only that he had returned to hospital but played funeral music, which left little doubt about what was happening.

"There is a mood of sadness and uncertainty about the future," said Saadi Kilani, a journalist. "People stopped going to parties a week ago, when the King returned to hospital in the US. There was even a small run on the banks. This morning everybody went to pray. You can see some people crying in the streets."

The sense of the end of an era for Jordan is all the greater because of the King's replacement of his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, with Abdullah, his eldest son, during his brief return to Jordan two weeks ago. "Nobody knows what the new man is like," said a businessman. "Hassan was not very popular but he was crown prince for 34 years and people knew what to expect from him."

Most Jordanians are of Palestinian origin. In the rain-soaked vegetable market of al-Husseini refugee camp, just below the King's Raghada palace, feelings were ambivalent. Mohammed Abwa, born in Amman but whose family came from Jaffa, in what is now Israel, was holding a radio up to his ear to hear the latest news. "Nothing new," he said, putting it down. "But people here liked him. Some of the shops in the market have closed because he is close to the end."

Other Palestinians in the camp felt this was not a good moment to express feelings.

"No, no, no," said a trader as he sorted onions in a tray. "Please don't talk to me." Another Palestinian standing near by whispered: "You know why he

said that. He doesn't want trouble with the police. They are very active at the moment."

By the Roman amphitheatre in Amman, a favourite meeting place for the thousands of Iraqi refugees in Jordan, people huddled under awnings to avoid the storm.

Although most Jordanians knew the King was very ill, they were only beginning to realise yesterday that his death might be a matter of hours. "The government should have prepared the people better," said an Iraqi businessman long resident in Jordan. "Of course the insiders knew all along what was happening, but not the rest. Nothing will happen now, but there will be trouble later. Rivalries within the royal family are not over."

He was one of the few in Amman willing to speculate about the future. "Jordan will inevitably be weaker without the King. His heir is untried. Probably it lessens the chances of the US doing anything against Iraq because of the uncertain situation here. [Israeli prime minister Benjamin] Netanyahu may want to come to the funeral, which gives the Jordanians a problem."

The imminence of the king's death has silenced talk for the moment about why he sacked Hassan. Mr Kilani said: "People don't really discuss the issue... They accept Abdullah." The former crown prince, who disappeared from view for a week after his dismissal, has re-emerged. Privately, however, some Jordanians speculate on how long royal unity will last after the King's funeral.

Overall, Jordanians do feel King Hussein protected them from the country's neighbours, all of them more powerful.

He balanced between Israel, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, in the pay of many but bought by nobody.

Jordanians know these external pressures are increasing and wonder how Abdullah, an army general long considered uninterested in politics, will cope with them.



King Hussein in 1955

peatedly promised the King a just peace in the Middle East - and then proved too cowardly to confront the Israelis.

And we shall have to suffer all the glitz adoration that the guilty show for dead kings. We've already heard President Bill Clinton's soliloquy - "a wonderful human being... a champion of peace" - and we know what Arafat will say because he's said it before: that King Hussein has been a Saladin, the warrior knight who drove the Crusaders from Palestine.

In truth, it was the Israelis who drove the Hashemites from Palestine, but Clinton's words - despite the gutless nature of the man who uttered them - somehow got it right. What king would ever turn up at his own state security jail to drive his most vociferous political prisoner home?

Leith Shubailath had infuriated the monarch - he was a man easily riled - and was slapped into clink for asking why the queen wept at Yitzhak Rabin's funeral.

When the King arrived at the

THE ROYAL SUCCESSION

Prince Mohammed
Brother, born 1940

Princess Dina
Wife, 1955-56 (divorced)
ne Dina Abdel Hamid

Princess Aila
born 1956

Queen Aila
Wife, 1972-77 (died in
air crash) ne Aila Toukan

Princess Haya
born 1974

Queen Noor
Wife, 1978-present
ne Lisa Halaby

Prince Hassan
Brother, born 1947
former crown prince

Prince Ali
born 1975

Prince Faisal
born 1963

Princess Zein
born 1968

Princess Alaka
born 1968

Prince Hamzah
born 1980

Prince Hashim
born 1981

Princess Iman
born 1983

Princess Ranyah
born 1986

Jordan's balancing act faces serious upset

IT WAS always a balancing act. Jordan is a buffer state between more powerful countries, notably Israel and Iraq. King Hussein's political career was spent playing his enemies off against each other.

It was not easy. The king needed to keep in with the great powers, but preserve his nationalist credentials. An early act of the young Harrow and Sandhurst-educated monarch was to fire his British military adviser "Gubb Fasha". In 1967 he joined Egypt and Syria to fight Israel only to lose the West Bank. In 1991 he won

overwhelming popular support by maintaining a friendly neutrality towards Iraq during the Gulf war. But the king was also the man who crushed the Palestinians in Jordan in a bloody civil war in 1970 and three years later he secretly flew to Israel to tell a disbelieving Israeli premier that Egypt and Syria were about to launch a war.

He played both ends against the middle because he believed Jordan's weakness - 4.4 million people and no natural

resources or defences - left him no choice. The king also knew any foreign policy failures would have immediate domestic consequences.

More than half the population of Jordan is Palestinian, largely excluded from power but dominating private business. He needed an Israeli guarantee against Iraq, but not at the price of permanently alienating the Palestinians.

His death, considered all but inevitable, comes at a bad moment for Jordan. In 1994 the King signed a peace treaty with Israel. It has produced no

economic and few political dividends and is unpopular among Jordanians and Palestinians alike, although it got him back into the good graces of the US. A year later he broke with Iraq. But negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are now stalemated and Saddam Hussein has survived. Both have felt free to send their assassination squads into the streets of Amman.

Washington is pressuring Jordan to turn itself into a base for action against Iraq, a policy wildly unpopular among ordinary Jordanians.

There is a much bigger question mark over the future of Jordanian policy than expected a month ago. This is because of the dismissal of Crown Prince Hassan, the king's brother and primary lieutenant. The new heir to the throne, the king's eldest son Prince Abdullah, is an unknown quantity.

For the moment Jordan is weaker, because part of its strength was the astuteness and prestige of King Hussein. Its neighbours are waiting to see if the house King Hussein built will hold together.

BANK OF SCOTLAND® INTEREST RATE CHANGE.

With effect from 4th February 1999, interest rates payable on the undernoted accounts have changed.

Britannic
GROUP SERVICES

BRITANNIC GROUP SERVICES LIMITED IN
ASSOCIATION WITH BANK OF SCOTLAND

BRITANNIC SOVEREIGN ACCOUNT	AER%	Gross%	Net%
Balances up to £1,999	3.29%	3.25%	2.60%
Balances from £2,000 to £4,999	4.33%	4.25%	3.40%
Balances from £5,000	4.85%	4.75%	3.80%

BANK OF SCOTLAND®

For up to date rates please refer to the Britannic Sovereign Account. The Sovereign Account is offered through Britannic Group Services Limited, a subsidiary of Britannic Assurance and is provided by Bank of Scotland. *AER (Annual Equivalent Rate) This represents the annual rate effectively received by the customer if interest at the gross rate applied during a year remained in the account and self compounded interest. An every advert for a savings product, where a rate is displayed, will contain an AER, you will be able to compare more easily a unit return you can expect from your savings, or a rate "Gross". The rate of interest paid without the deduction of lower rate tax to be applied to the payments. **Net - The rates quoted are indicative of the current gross rate but lower rate tax at the current rate of 20%. Interest payable monthly. Interest rates subject to variation. Bank of Scotland and 425 are registered trademarks of The Government and Company of the Bank of Scotland. Bank of Scotland advisers at The Banking Centre.

Britain put on alert for IRA bombs

A REVIEW of security across mainland Britain was underway yesterday amid fears of renewed violence by dissident republicans opposed to the IRA ceasefire and the Ulster peace process.

The Home Office denied ministers had been warned that specific mainland sites, such as Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands area, were being targeted by the breakaway faction of the Provisional IRA, but said a review of security was being carried out.

"There is a review of security under way, but there has been no specific threat from any individual terrorist group that has led to this action," said a Home Office spokesman.

Since the ceasefire, security has been relaxed around likely targets such as the Palace of Westminster, but it is believed police have reinforced the tight security around the Square Mile of the City of London, a prime economic target for the bombers in the past.

The review came as Martin McGuinness, the Sinn Féin

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

chief negotiator, said yesterday: "There are republican rejectionists out there who are obviously opposed to the Sinn Féin peace strategy and who wish to bring it down. These people are unrepresentative and they are totally and absolutely clearly not speaking for the overwhelming majority of republicans who have in election after election supported the Sinn Féin peace strategy."

Calling on David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist First Minister of the new Northern Assembly, to hold his nerve, Mr McGuinness said on BBC radio that there were also unrepresentative loyalist groups attacking the nationalist community on an almost daily basis. "These can be defeated by combined political action of unionist and republican leaders working together to implement the Good Friday Agreement."

Tony Blair is prepared to go to Belfast for more talks with the parties, if necessary, to break the

deadlock between the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin over the establishment of the power-sharing executive, which has threatened to wreck the peace process.

The crisis in the peace process was discussed in a phone call between Mr Blair and President Bill Clinton on Thursday night. There are rumours at Westminster that President Clinton will be exerting pressure on Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams and Mr McGuinness, during the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States for the IRA to call a halt to the punishment beatings, which have undermined the process.

Mr Trimble said he was sticking to his demand for a start to the decommissioning of IRA weapons before sitting down in the executive with Mr Adams and Mr McGuinness.

Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, ruled out suggestions circulating at Westminster that establishment of the assembly and executive could be suspended until a solution was found.

Sinn Féin and Ahern clash over jailings

AN OPEN rift appeared between the Irish Government and Sinn Féin over the Good Friday Agreement as four men were jailed yesterday for killing Limerick Garda Jerry McCabe during a June 1996 IRA robbery. The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, on a visit to Northern Ireland, insisted the four would serve "whatever sentences were handed down by the court". But Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness predicted "I certainly

BY ALAN MURDOCH
in Dublin

think these men will qualify" for the early release scheme.

Dublin has repeatedly insisted Good Friday Agreement early releases were qualified by a protocol, subject of intense argument during final negotiations last April, excluding from the scheme certain prisoners awaiting trial including the McCabe accused. Former British

escaper Pearse McCauley, 34, of Strabane, and Kevin Walsh, 42, of Patrickswell, Limerick, were jailed for 14 years at Dublin's Special Criminal Court. Jeremiah Sheehy, 35, of Rathkeale, and Michael O'Neill, 48, of Patrickswell, received 12 and 11-year terms respectively.

The four pleaded guilty to manslaughter. A fifth, John Quinn, aged 30, received six years for conspiracy to rob.



Peter Mandelson, MP for Hartlepool, leaves hand prints in wet cement yesterday to mark the first opening of a cinema in Hartlepool since the Eighties - a 26m, seven-screen complex. Owen Humphreys

Inches stay for 10 more years

BY GEOFF MEADE

BRITAIN IS keeping feet and inches for another 10 years - because America has failed to adopt EU standards.

Imperial units were due to disappear at the end of this year when metrication replaced what Brussels calls the "inch-pound" system across the European Union.

But industries facing multi-billion pound costs to meet new metric-only labelling laws have won a breathing space until 2009.

Moves to harmonise units of measure began 30 years, before Britain joined the EU. Since then centimetres, metres and kilograms have steadily been taking over, with famous exceptions such as the mile and the pint of beer.

Businesses facing a labelling nightmare were given a reprieve in 1989 and told that imperial units would finally be outlawed from 1999.

But firms dealing in goods from consumer electronics to perfumery have battled on, complaining that they would have to set up two production lines, with goods destined for the EU market labelled with metric measurements and those going for export to the US continuing to use imperial measures.

Without America ready to make the conversion, the European Commission has agreed to recommend another delay.

"US legislation requires that declarations of quantities of consumer products be given both metric and inch-pound units," according to a new Commission report.

"European exporters are obliged to place dual indications on products destined for the US market."

Euro MPs are now being asked to endorse the reprieve to allow continued dual labelling, so "maintaining compatibility with the present US legislation".

The Commission recommendation states: "With the objective of facilitating international trade the proposal creates a further transition period of 10 years, during which time measures must be taken both by the EU and US to eliminate remaining obstacles especially regarding labelling."

The European Commissioner Martin Bangemann has been frustrated by the failure of the US administration to follow up its commitment to moves towards the metric system, which was originally promised back in the 19th century.

Stalker targeted radio celebrities before death

A BUSINESSMAN accused of stalking the television presenter Ulrika Jonsson also bombarded Terry Wogan and other BBC Radio 2 personalities with bizarre letters and gifts before his death last month, it emerged yesterday.

Mr Wogan, Ken Bruce and Alex Lester realised that they

BY JACKIE BURDON

had all been pestered by Nicholas Rathbone, 40, a Cheshire company director, when they heard reports of his death yesterday.

Mr Rathbone's body was found near his car on 20 January. He was killed by carbon

monoxide poisoning. He had been due to appear before Maidenhead magistrates' court on Thursday on charges of stalking Ms Jonsson.

Mr Rathbone met Mr Wogan and his radio show producer, Paul Walters, three years ago, during an outside broadcast in Crewe. Then the letters started.

Mr Walters now has a whole box file, including a manuscript of a book "I call it the Rathbone file," he said. "Terry said to me: 'One day this guy will do something silly. He will either come down here and stick a knife in me or kill somebody or something.' I stopped showing them to him after a while."

All beautifully word-processed in a distinctive italic typeface, they revealed Mr Rathbone believed the songs Mr Wogan played on his show contained secret messages for him alone. "Once or twice he didn't like the message, and he would write something rather vitriolic," Mr Walters said.

Mr Rathbone also repeatedly sent faxes to the late-night radio presenter Alex Lester, which revealed his fixation with a woman whose rejection he could not accept. It was only recently that Mr Lester realised that the woman was Ms Jonsson. "He seemed to be fixated with a woman who he imagined

had given him the come-on through something she said on TV. I had no idea who he meant. It seemed to me he had been rejected and could not understand it," Mr Lester said. "The next thing I knew, I got a letter with an enclosure which he asked me to deliver to Ulrika." He did not pass it on.

IN BRIEF

Compensation after penis surgery

A 62-YEAR-OLD man yesterday won £49,000 compensation from a hospital which removed most of his penis in a routine operation. James Bryans, 62, of Borehamwood, Herts, suffered severe depression after the operation at North London's Mount Vernon Hospital in 1993, which was aimed at helping him to urinate more easily.

RAF officer cleared of rape

A RAF officer was yesterday cleared of raping a guest at an air force dinner-dance. Flt Lt Stephen Thacker, 34, denied raping the woman after the dinner at his base near Swindon, Wiltshire, in March last year. The jury sitting at Bristol Crown Court took four hours to clear the officer, who had told the court the woman had instigated sex.

Boys held on stabbing charge

TWO BOYS, aged 13 and 14, charged with attempting to murder a 13-year-old boy were remanded into secure accommodation until 12 February when they appeared in court in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, yesterday. The alleged victim was discovered with serious stab wounds on 19 January at the bottom of an incline in Harrogate.

Two teenagers killed by train

TWO TEENAGE boys were killed yesterday when they were struck by a train on the railway line outside Londonderry, Ulster. They were hit by the Londonderry-to-Belfast passenger train, close to the village of Greysteel, said an RUC spokesman. The youngsters were declared dead on arrival at hospital in Londonderry.

Council admits to causing stress

A CITY COUNCIL has paid a former employee an interim payment of £10,000 after admitting it was responsible for causing her excessive stress at work. Birmingham City Council is being sued by Beverley Lancaster, aged in her 40s, who claims she was forced to retire from her post as housing officer because of a stress-related illness.

Brown hits back over travel costs

GORDON BROWN hit back at criticism of his refusal to answer questions about his travel arrangements yesterday with a declaration by Andrew Turnbull, the Treasury's Permanent Secretary, that proper procedures had been followed on a trip abroad. Tory MPs questioned his use of helicopters and private jets costing £20,000.

Web lottery wants to advertise

A MULTI-MILLION dollar jackpot lottery operating on the Internet has been granted a judicial review for the right to overturn the advertising monopoly of the National Lottery. Millions2000 Internet Lottery wants the right to advertise its prizes of up to \$50m (£13m) in Britain.

'I shot down Amy Johnson's plane' admits old soldier

SHE was the feminist icon of her time, the first woman to fly solo to Australia. But the fatal crash that claimed Amy Johnson's life has always been shrouded in mystery.

Now it seems her death was a cruel combination of bad luck, a bad memory and a keen gunner at an anti-aircraft battery on the river Thames.

Yesterday, old soldier Tom Mitchell, 83, admitted that it was he who shot the heroine down when she twice failed to give the correct identification code during a routine flight on 5 January, 1941.

Eleven years earlier Johnson

BY GARY FINN

had stunned the world, breaking gender stereotypes and taboos of the time, by flying from England to Australia.

Nearly 60 years on, Mr Mitchell, aged 83, admits to a pressing sense of guilt for killing a cultural icon. But following recent family deaths he felt he had to set the record straight.

He said: "The reason Amy was shot down was because she gave the wrong colour of the day [a signal to identify planes known by all British forces] over radio."

Mr Mitchell was one of more



Johnson: Feminist icon

than 20 soldiers based at the Thames Estuary, who were ordered to shoot down the unidentified plane flying towards the

English Channel on 5 January 1941. Unknown to Mr Mitchell and his colleagues the pilot was the legendary Amy Johnson, who was serving as an Air Transport Auxiliary pilot.

Mr Mitchell explained how the plane was sighted and contacted by radio. A request was made for the signal - she gave the wrong one twice.

"Sixteen rounds of shells were fired and the plane dived into the Thames Estuary. We all thought it was an enemy plane until the next day when we read the papers and discovered it was Amy. The officers told us never to tell anyone what happened."

first direct

whoa!
free banking

24 hours a day, Bob's your uncle!
0800 24 24 24
www.firstdirect.co.uk

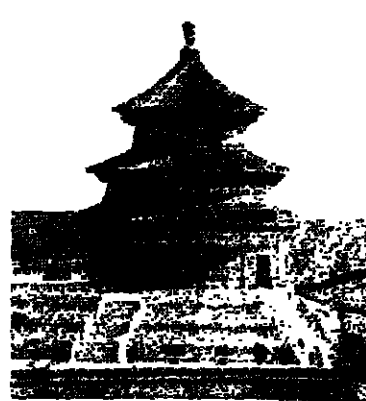
Free banking means that there are no charges for cheque and cash machine withdrawals in the UK, standing orders and direct debits, Switch payments or monthly statements. Applicants must be 18 or over. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Freepost, Leeds LS98 2RP. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. To maintain a quality service, calls may be monitored and/or recorded. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group

On the Tracks of Marco Polo

PEKING, SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND GRAND CANAL CRUISE

This is a wonderful opportunity to visit some of the well known sights of ancient and contemporary China at a very moderate tariff. The journey commences with a scheduled flight from London Heathrow to Peking. In Peking stay at the 4-star Holiday Inn Lido Hotel for two nights on full board. Included during our stay are visits to the Great Wall, dinner at a local restaurant and a visit to the famous Peking Opera.

From Peking fly to Shanghai for two nights at the 3-star Zhaoan Hotel including a full sightseeing programme. From Shanghai we board the train and travel west to the 'Garden City' of Suzhou, stay two nights at the 4-star Aster Hotel where we visit two of the most famous gardens and take a three-hour cruise by launch along the Grand Canal to the 'Silk' town of Wuxi. The following day return by road to Shanghai and fly to Peking in the morning. In the afternoon a visit is made to Tian'an Men Square and the Forbidden City with a farewell Peking Duck banquet in the evening. The journey



9 nights from £745

concludes with a return non-stop flight from Peking to London Heathrow arriving the same day as you depart.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

per person in a twin bedded room

1999 Mondays
March 22 £745
March 29 £795.00 - April 12 £6795.00
May 10, 24 £795.00 - June 7, 21 £795.00

Single supplement £295.00

The price includes: return air travel, transfers, accommodation as described on a full board basis, sightseeing as indicated, UK airport tax. Not included: visa procurement, travel insurance, luggage and overseas airport taxes. Our current Conditions of Booking is copy of which is available on request shall apply to all reservations.

0171-616 1000

VV

VÖYAGES JULES VERNE

21 Dorset Square, London NW1 6GG

Travel Partners Ltd. Ltd. is a travel agent. Our offices are open for telephone reservations from 9am to 5pm weekdays & 9am to 1pm at the weekends. For personal advice our office hours are 9am to 5pm weekdays only.

Byers pledges to save Longbridge

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday made it clear that BMW would be offered aid from the taxpayer to keep Rover's giant Longbridge plant open.

Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said that it was no secret that ministers had been discussing possible support to keep the plant open and build a new model at Longbridge.

Nevertheless, ministers and unions agree that the survival of the plant has never been more uncertain than now.

If the works does shut it would not just mean the disappearance of another piece of Britain's industrial landscape. It would represent the end of an era: in motoring, industrial re-

BY MICHAEL HARRISON
Business Editor

lations, and manufacturing. A vast and sprawling complex concealing 12 miles of road, nine miles of railway and an immense subterranean network of tunnels, Longbridge has always been more than just a factory. It is a way of life, a small town in its own right providing a livelihood for 30,000 car workers at its peak.

It was a symbol of Britain's post-war industrial prowess and it became the battleground on which left and right fought for the hearts and minds of the working man during the epic union struggles of the 1970s. Books have been devoted to

the sociology of Longbridge - the birthplace of the affluent working class. It was Longbridge man who begat Mondeo man. Now BMW man looks ready to decree that there is no place in the modern car industry for Longbridge.

The end of car production there would blow a great big hole in the West Midlands economy. Some 50,000 jobs are dependent on the plant. Every day some 500 suppliers deliver components into the site with a total annual value of £1.5bn.

But the end of Longbridge would also tear a huge piece out of the fabric of our motoring history. The Austin Seven, the Big Seven and the Cambridge models of the inter-war years, the

Mini, and the Austin 1100, the car which became the UK's best seller for most of the 1960s, were all produced there. Together with its sister plant at Cowley in Oxford, Longbridge once accounted for one in every three cars sold in Britain.

Car sales figures for last month, show that Rover's share of the market shrank to less than 5 per cent.

The plant's origins date back to 1905. Riding around Birmingham on his bicycle in search of somewhere to start making cars, Herbert Austin came across the disused White and Pike printing works. Situated next to the Midland Railway's main Birmingham to Gloucester and Halesowen branch

lines, it was an ideal location for bringing parts in and taking finished cars out.

He bought the site for £7,750 and began production two years later. In its first year Longbridge produced just 23 cars. But by 1910 the workforce had reached 1,000 and Austin had added a night shift.

The advent of war in 1914 turned Longbridge into an aircraft and munitions factory. By 1918 it had produced more than 2,000 aeroplanes, including the famous SE5a fighter, 8 million shells, 650 guns and 500 armoured cars.

The inter-war years saw the return to car production and the introduction of the Austin Seven and Cambridge models.

By 1930 Longbridge was producing 1,000 cars a week.

The outbreak of the Second World War saw a return to military production and by 1945 Longbridge had produced 3,000 aircraft including Hurricanes, Stirling and Lancaster bombers. A year after the war ended Longbridge celebrated the production of its millionth car, an Austin 16F.

In 1952, Austin merged with the Nuffield organisation and Longbridge became the headquarters of the British Motor Corporation. Under an agreement with Donald Healey, Longbridge began production of the Austin Healey 100 sports car in 1953 to be followed six years later by the Mini.

In 1964 production reached an all-time peak of 345,245 vehicles. Since then, however, it has been more or less downhill for Longbridge.

It developed a reputation for industrial unrest. Sir Michael Edwardes came with an ace of closing the plant in the late 1970s after a succession of long and bruising encounters with trade union militants, led by Red Robbo - Derek Robinson. Mrs Thatcher would have engineered its closure a decade later had her attempt to sell Austin Rover to Ford succeeded.

Periodically, a new dawn would appear to break for Longbridge but they always turned out to be false. In 1980

Longbridge began production of the Metro at the new west works. The facility was bristling with so much new technology that it doubled Britain's population of welding robots.

But the arrival of the Japanese transplant factories in the 1980s, starting with Nissan, showed the British motor industry what an efficient car plant really looked like. In 1997, Nissan's Sunderland plant was the most productive in Europe with an output of 98 cars per man. Longbridge ranked twenty-fifth alongside Skoda with a production rate of 33 cars per man.

It is that one chilling statistic as much as anything that may well do for Longbridge.

A long wait for the news from Bavaria

FROM THE outside, it looked like any Friday at one of Britain's biggest car plants. The shift workers poured in and out of the many gates of Rover's Longbridge Works, huge lorries delivered parts and by yesterday evening the site was largely empty - for there is no Friday night shift.

But inside the works it had been one long day of waiting, hoping and uncertainty while the board of the parent company met in Munich and finally sealed the fate of BMW's chairman, Bernd Pischetsrieder, the greatest supporter of keeping Longbridge open. He and his biggest opponent, the deputy chairman, Wolfgang Reitzle, were both removed from the company.

Longbridge workers heading home earlier were asking journalists outside the plant what the latest news was from Bavaria - they had been told nothing by their own managers. John Partridge, Midlands regional secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union - the largest at Rover - said last night: "Understandably, morale at Longbridge is very low amid all the frenzied speculation. You can almost see the question-mark hanging over the works."

He said the plant's 14,000 workers had desperately wanted Mr Pischetsrieder to keep his job. He was seen as the man who guaranteed the owner's adherence to last autumn's deal to save the plant, in return for new flexible working arrangements and higher productivity promised by the unions. "He is the architect of

BY NICHOLAS SCHOON

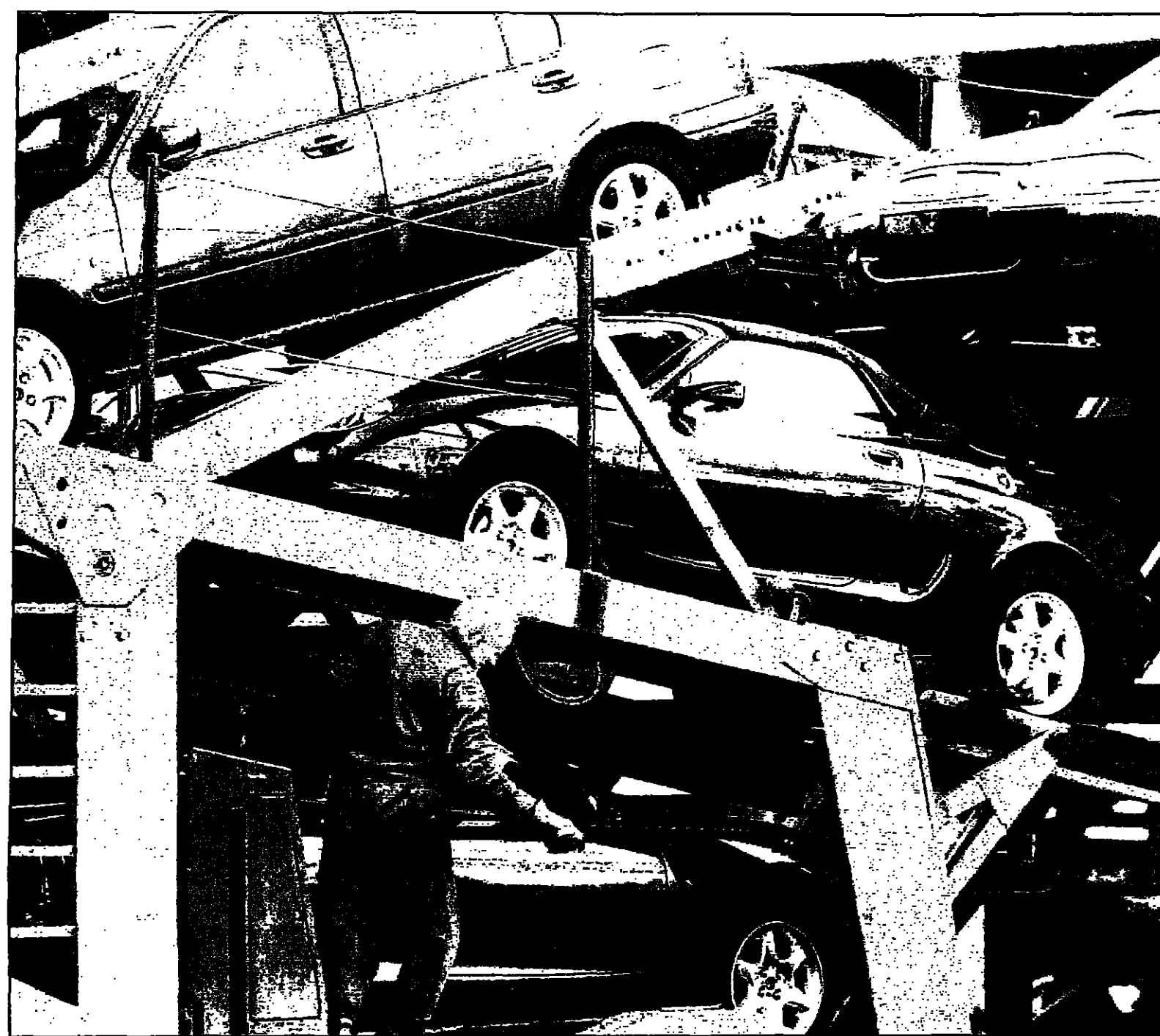
that agreement to invest in Longbridge," said Mr Partridge. Now they feared the works on Birmingham's southern fringe may face drastic cut-backs or closure.

Rover's sales have sunk to half the level of a year ago. The 11,200 vehicles sold last month represent 4.6 per cent of the UK market, and its losses are costing BMW dearly.

One worker, who asked not to be named, said: "It's the end of this place... because he [Mr Pischetsrieder] was the only one who supported us through all the difficulties." Another said: "I've heard... the only two places BMW is interested in are Cowley [Oxford] and Solihull, Birmingham."

Others complained about the uncertainty hanging over them and management's inability to give them any reassurances about the future. Night shifts were ended for several weeks at Christmas but have since been reinstated.

Roger Lyons, secretary of the Manufacturing Science and Finance union, said British unions would be "relieved" that Mr Reitzle had not taken over, but that the new man's views on investment at Rover were unknown. "We will be seeking an early meeting with Professor [Joachim] Milberg," Mr Lyons said. "We don't believe a change in personnel should in any way affect a done deal." Union sources described Professor Milberg as a well-respected, long-serving BMW executive who would be a "safe pair of hands."



A worker loading cars on to a trailer at Longbridge yesterday

John Voss

Soft line with Rover was the downfall of car-loving boss

BERND PISCHESTRIEDER, dismissed yesterday from the board of BMW, is not averse to taking a high-performance model out for a spin and wrecking it.

A soft-spoken Anglophile, he was accused by his German colleagues of having been too kind to Rover's British management.

He joined BMW in 1973 after studying engineering, and rose quickly through the ranks. He acquired international experience between 1982 and 85 as head of the South African subsidiary.

Mr Pischetsrieder took over the reins of BMW in 1993, and wasted little time taking the family-owned company on a dangerous road. He saw the Bavarian firm as too isolated among the behemoths that were taking over the world,

BY IMRE KARACS
in Bonn

and set about expansion. Only a year after into his reign, he stunned the automotive world by buying Rover, which was then allied with Honda. The move was widely greeted in the car industry as a bold step to broaden BMW's product range with a mass-market, front-wheel drive model range that would bring technological benefits for the rear-wheel drive BMW line.

Although Rover was a money-loser, most believed that BMW, with its reputation for quality engineering and deep pockets, would have few difficulties in turning Rover around.

Indeed, even as BMW poured billions of marks into Rover, most analysts continued



Pischetsrieder: Refused to take a tougher line

to put their faith in Mr Pischetsrieder who kept turning in higher profits and sales. Last year, though, Munich believes the BMW boss lost the plot. Despite mounting evidence of

problems at the British plants, which he concealed from his board, he would not contemplate a tougher line with British managers, as advocated by his adversaries.

Many factors were responsible for Rover's poor performance - notably the strong pound - and Mr Pischetsrieder asked for patience. The owners, though, grew increasingly concerned.

The recent revelation that profits fell last year, despite a record turnover, appeared to seal his fate.

Munich, and the money-men in Frankfurt, decided BMW would be better off without him. As rumours spread about his imminent dismissal, Mr Pischetsrieder experienced the final humiliation: BMW share prices soared by 7 per cent.

Hard man of BMW also goes

THIS IS not the first time that insiders had prematurely crowned Wolfgang Reitzle as the new chief executive of BMW.

Mr Reitzle was seen for many years as the unchallenged "crown prince". But when the succession took place in 1993, he was overlooked for the top job in favour of Bernd Pischetsrieder.

There was a question about his loyalty, amid rumours that he was flirting with Porsche. The owners may have also mistrusted his antagonistic style.

Worse was to follow. After the takeover of Rover, Mr Reitzle was handed the poison chalice. He maintained that Rover could only be run as an integrated part of BMW - in other

words, by people from Munich rather than by British managers.

He eventually wriggled out of that assignment, but never wavered in his criticism of the British subsidiary, or of his boss's recipe for success.

By all accounts, Mr Reitzle is a brilliant engineer. He joined BMW after university as a production technology expert. He held several jobs, including head of engine production, head of technical planning, and general manager.

He was only 36 years old when he joined the board, with responsibility for research and development. The technical excellence of BMW cars owes



Reitzle: Brilliant engineer with go-getting personality

a lot to his vision, company insiders said. Mr Reitzle never missed an opportunity to point out that his baby, BMW, was growing from

strength to strength. Sales and profits of the Munich factory soared, and the cars basked in almost universal accolades.

Nor did he stop reminding whoever would care to listen that the Rover project has been a flop. He continued to advocate limiting the Rover range just to Minis and Land Rovers, and possibly closing Longbridge.

In personality Mr Reitzle is the very opposite of Mr Pischetsrieder.

While Mr Pischetsrieder is something of a quiet eccentric, Mr Reitzle is loud and brash, with film-star looks and a life-style to match. He currently lives with the German TV personality Nina Ruge.



CUT OUT and SEND

to your Member of Parliament

To: MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Dear
Please read the report by the Animal Defenders on the use of animals in circuses, entitled 'The Ugliest Show on Earth'. 7,000 hours of observation backed by 800 hours of videotape concluded that daily life for circus animals is one of boredom, frustration, and confinement, often leading to abnormal behaviour. Daily physical abuse includes the use of whips, iron bars, and broomhandles to move animals about. I believe that the use of animals in circuses cannot be justified.

Please also sign EDM 64 'Circus Animals', and write to George Howarth at the Home Office and to Alan Meale at the Department of the Environment Transport & Regions, asking that in the first instance, performing animal training centres (winter quarters) be brought under the 1981 Zoo Licensing Act (so that established welfare standards are not lowered for circuses), and second, the use of animals in travelling circuses be banned.

Name: Address: Postcode:

to The Animal Defenders

Please send me a free information pack
I enclose a donation to help your work:
£15 £25 £50 £ Other
Please make cheques PO payable to Animal Defenders (UK) and signed

Name: Address: Postcode:

The Animal Defenders, 11, 261 Goshawk Road, London W12 9PE
Tel. 0181 846 8777

Inches stay for 10 more years

Johnson's soldier

Marco Polo

first direct
phwoar
free banking
24 hours a day, Bob's your uncle!
0800 24 24 24
www.firstdirect.co.uk
Free banking means that there are no charges for cheque and cash machine withdrawals in the UK, standing orders and direct debits. Switch payments or monthly payments are subject to a £1.00 fee. For full details of our services visit www.firstdirect.co.uk. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. To maintain a quality service, calls may be monitored and/or recorded. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group

THEY MAY look like a pile of old rubble, but for geologists the grey-black stones found in Canada have turned out to be the oldest rocks in the world.

Scientists have dated the rocks, found in the western Slave Province of the North-western Territories, to 4.06 billion years, making them hundreds of millions of years older than the previous oldest rocks and half a billion years younger than the Earth itself.

Sam Bowring, professor of geology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, said the find opens a new window on a little-known period.

"What is remarkable about these rocks is that they are not remarkable. They look like any other rocks on Earth today, which shows how the production of rocks hasn't changed in that time."

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

Geologists once thought no rocks could be older than 3.8 billion years, because the Earth had suffered meteorite bombardment before then, suggesting nothing on its surface could have survived.

But in the Eighties scientists who analysed minerals in the ancient rocks of Western Australia discovered crystals more than 4 billion years old. The search began to find rocks that could be this old.

The Canadian rocks are igneous — they were formed under the volcanic conditions of the Earth's interior — and contain microscopic "time capsules" of zircon crystals. Two kinds of uranium isotopes within the crystals degrade into isotopes of lead at a known rate, giving scientists two

clocks to gauge the age of the material to within a couple of million years.

The oldest rocks to contain signs of life date to 3.8 billion years and were found in sedimentary deposits in Greenland. Sedimentary rocks are formed under watery, low-temperature conditions which are conducive to the survival of living organisms. Professor Bowring said he hopes to search the same part of Canada for similar sedimentary rocks which may possess fossilised remains of the earliest life forms to have evolved.

"There could be sedimentary rocks dating back to then, although no one knows when the oceans were in place which helped them to form," he said. If we find sedimentary rocks as old as 4 billion years I think we'll find evidence of life in them."

Ian Williams, a geologist at the Australian National University in Canberra and co-discoverer of the rocks, said: "The real interest in the old rocks will be to study their chemical and isotopic compositions, which will provide direct information on the rock-forming processes that were operating 4,000 million years ago and how the earliest continents formed."

"Even though these are the oldest rocks known, hidden within some of their zircon crystals we have found remnants of smaller zircons that are even older. These must have come from the rock from which these oldest rocks were formed."

The latest find could also help to establish whether the Earth's crust undergoes continual turnover or whether it is the result of a gradual accumulation of new material.



The grey-black volcanic rocks of western Canada were formed four billion years ago.

Sainsbury's admit Cleese ad is faulty

SAINSBURY'S HIGH-PROFILE
Value to Shout About campaign, fronted by John Cleese, has flopped, the chain admitted.

The television commercials, featuring Mr. Cleese as a garishly clad eccentric running around a store with a megaphone, has been voted the most irritating ad campaign of the past 12 months and was criticized by staff for making them look foolish. Now Dino Adriano, Sainsbury's chief executive, has said that although it helped bring in more customers, it "did not meet its sales targets". He said the average transaction size and average spend had fallen over the past few months as shoppers cherry-picked the best bargains.

Although only one element in a wider bid by Sainsbury's to shed consumer perceptions of the store as expensive, Mr Cleese's role in the campaign made him its most public face.

"John Cleese is the last resort of people who have run out of ideas," said Stefano Hatfield, editor of the advertising industry magazine *Campaign*. "If in doubt, call for John Cleese or Joanna Lumley. John Cleese

BY RHY'S WILLIAMS

running around shouting has been done so many times before that nobody takes any notice any more."

Mr Hatfield added that the advert's failings reflected difficulties Sainsbury's was having trying to communicate value for money while not implying any loss in quality. "From being the middle-class grocer, Sainsbury's has not really found itself a new positioning from which it challenge Tesco," Sainsbury's said they would continue to use Mr Cleese as an advertising vehicle in the short term despite his cost - reportedly £400,000.

The agency responsible, Abbott Mead Vickers BDDO, admitted earlier films had "over-executed" the idea of "value worth shouting about" but more recent work had been well received in research. "Sainsbury's always used to talk about quality and to suddenly start talking about values was a shock for a lot of people," said Mark Peterson, account director at Abbott Mead Vickers.

Pair deny 'Mardi Gra' bombings

TWO ELDERLY brothers accused of carrying out the "Mardi Gra" bombing campaign against Barclays Bank and Sainsbury's supermarkets yesterday denied all charges.

Edgar Pearce, 61, and his brother Ronald, 67, pleaded not guilty to a total of 20 counts at the Old Bailey, related to the three-and-a-half year black-

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

The alleged offences took place from 1 December 1994 to 28 April 1998. The men, both from Chiswick, west London, were remanded in custody and are due to stand trial on 7 April.



The Peugeot 106 range now starts from just £7,120* on the road. What's more, for only £149 a month¹ (plus deposit and final payment 13.9% APR) you can get a 106 Zest with 2 years Free insurance*. Call our Openline on 0345 106 106 or visit our website, www.peugeot.co.uk for more information.

106 
PEUGEOT

ASGARD PRESENTS

James Taylor

June 10th & 11th
London Royal Albert Hall
0171 589 8212

July 30th
Knutsford Tatton Park
0161 247 4664

August 2nd
Cardiff International Arena
01222 224488

August 5th
Newcastle Telewest Arena
0191 402 8000

August 7th
Edinburgh Lennoxlove House
0131 225 7888

For London only tickets also available from Agents
Stargreen: 0171 734 8932, First Call: 0870 440 1121
& Telehouse: 0171 344 4444 or in person at
HMV Stores & Tower Records (subject to booking fees)

Grammy Award
winning album
"Hourglass"
available now

Gandhi's luck to miss the spiteful press

THINKING ABOUT the fate of England's football coach, as every newspaper and news-show insists we must, I have also been thinking about Mahatma Gandhi. Agreed: the connections made by the human mind are sometimes very strange.

IN 1934 a great earthquake shook northern India and many thousands of people, most of them poor, died under rubble and earth. Mahatma Gandhi said that it was their own fault. They had been sinful and God was punishing them.

As Gandhi was then the most popular political figure in India and on his way to sainthood status in the rest of the world, his remarks were of a kind which would come to be described later in the century – this week in fact – as an “error of judgement”. Gandhi symbolised non-violence and, by extension, gentleness and compassion. This reputation was obviously at risk.

There were also more pragmatic considerations for his colleagues in the Indian independence movement. Gandhi was then their only mass leader, but his political power depended on the support of unprivileged Indians like the many who were now grieving over their crushed and dead relations. Gandhi already had critics and enemies, Indian as well as British, inside the independence movement and out of it. His religious beliefs melded his own Hinduism with aspects of Christianity. “Mish-mash” is this week's word. Earthquakes-as-punishment clearly owed as much to the Old Testament as anything in the ancient Indian epics. His social ideas – favouring handicrafts over machines, villages over industrial towns – were partly inspired by English Victorian utopians. His egalitarianism came from the Euro-

NOTEBOOK



IAN JACK

pean Enlightenment. He believed that the caste system detracted from human dignity, that untouchability should be abolished, that even the highest castes should clean their own cesspits.

Perhaps only in the most superficial way – his dress – did he completely exemplify the reality of the ordinary Indian. Almost everything else about him was controversial inside his own country.

The newspapers had a field day: “Gandhi's Gaffe”, “The Muddled Mahatma”, and so on. Politicians, sniffing the populist breeze, were quick to follow. The Minister for Transport and Government Stationery (Bengal) told the Calcutta Assembly, to laughter, that Gandhi “couldn't tell his karma from his Calvin”. There were many other jests of that kind.

Still, Gandhi might have survived had his fellow-leader, Pandit Nehru, not chosen to appear on an early All-India Radio talk show, *A Jolly Good Morning*, with Sunil and Smita. The programme was known for its “light, bright look” at current events and people in the news. Nehru did not expect searching questions about Hindu-Muslim relations, the cure for mass poverty, or how quickly (if at all) his country could leave the British Empire – otherwise he would not have gone on the show. And indeed he did not get them.

Sunil and Smita said it was great to have him in the studio. Nehru said it was great to be there. Smita adjusted her sari, uncovering a fetching slice of midriff. Sunil asked about the new Viceroy (“quite a nice bloke”, said Nehru). Smita wanted to know how his daughter, Indira, was getting on at her Swiss boarding school (“oh, y'know, throwin' snowballs, ski-in, eatin' fondue and that kinda thing”, said Nehru, smiling, “a typical Indian kid”).

It was going so well. Then came an awkward one: the earthquake question. Nehru had prepared for this; he knew what to do and say. A smile, a shrug, something about Gandhi just being Gandhi, the ever-present danger of misquotation.

But there was in Nehru a desperate wish to be liked, to be Mr Bloke, to share the opinions of your average man in a dhobi. So he said, well, y'know, if Gandhi had actually said what he was reported to have said, then, yes, he would have to go.

The next day Gandhi went. Several trays of photographic flash-powder fizzed and popped as a half-naked man retreated behind the doors of his ashram, where he span happily and privately for the next 30 years. Historians still argue over whether he had stayed. India might have been independent earlier than 1951, or won cricket's world cup before 1983.

HOW MUCH of the above is true? This much:

On 15 January 1934, an earthquake flattened several towns in the state of Bihar. The precise casualty figures will never be known, but certainly tens of thousands of people died. Gandhi, who was then campaigning against untouchability a thousand miles away in southern India, made a public statement. “A man like



Mahatma Gandhi, visiting London in 1948. Unlike Glenn Hoddle, he survived his comments on God's punishments

Hulton Getty

me”, he said, “cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins... For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign.”

Several of his friends and associates were shocked. Rabindranath Tagore, the writer/philosopher who was the first non-white to win a Nobel prize, issued another public statement in reply which expressed his “painful surprise” at his friend's “truly tragic” views.

It is all the more unfortunate, said Tagore, “because this kind of unscientific view of phenomenon is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen... If we associate ethical principles with the cosmic phenomena, we shall have to admit that human nature is morally much superior to [a] Providence that preaches its lessons of good behaviour in orgies of the worst behaviour possible. For we can never imagine

any civilised ruler of men making indiscriminate examples of casual victims... in order to impress others dwelling at a safe distance, who possibly deserve more severe condemnation.”

Gandhi, who could be stubborn and slippery at the same time, showed no remorse. Far from mulling about his words being taken out of context or distorted, he wrote a piece for his newspaper, the *Harizon*, which only added to the original offence. “We do not know the laws of God nor their working. Knowledge of the tallest scientist or the spiritualist is like a particle of dust... With me the connection between cosmic phenomena and human behaviour is a living faith that draws me nearer to God, humbles me and makes me readier for facing him.”

Nehru was beginning a tour of the earthquake zone when he read Gandhi's first statement. Later he wrote: “A staggering remark... Anything more opposed to the scientific outlook

it would be difficult to imagine... The idea of sin and divine wrath and man's relative importance in the affairs of the universe – they take us back a few hundred years when the Inquisition flourished and burned Giordano Bruno for his scientific heresy and sent many a witch to the stake!”

And that was that, pretty well. A robust exchange of views, then silence. India had a mainly illiterate population, newspaper circulations were small, their primary content information – culled from telegrams and government departments. The institutions, tools and excitement of modern democracy and the modern media had yet to arrive; the demons had yet to be electrified.

Gandhi sailed on. His remarks about the earthquake became a small footnote in his great biography, as overlooked as that phrase in our insurance documents – “excepting acts of God” – which Gandhi, after all, had only been trying to explain.

GANDHI AND Glenn Hoddle make a mad analogy. Their religious beliefs have little in common. Oddly, Gandhi, who was a sort of Hindu, did not believe that untouchability was, for the untouchable, a punishment for the sins of a previous life; whereas Hoddle, a sort of Christian, clearly would. All they share is a faith that the supernatural can intervene in human affairs and that the intervention can sometimes be punitive.

Most of the world used to think this. A lot of it does still. As an explanation for suffering, it may be crude, but it is only that – an explanation. Those who believe it can be just as compassionate – Gandhi for sure, Hoddle by various accounts – as those who do not. This simple difference between faith and behaviour used to be more widely understood.

Reading and watching the media this week, I could not help thinking how lucky a public figure like Gandhi had been to miss its fickle, orgasmic sensation-

alism. Every branch is infected. It can no longer be described as a tabloid phenomenon (the only widely available paper to put Hoddle in the sports section was the *Herald Tribune*). The vomit in the pail slid from side to side. At the beginning of the week, he must go. At the end, he deserves our sympathy. Mr Bloke had arisen, was inescapable in the form of men without proper jobs: David Mellor; Tony Banks. Charlie Whelan.

A desperation is increasingly evident, mainly the desperation of newspapers to sell copies in a uniquely competitive but declining market. Many people feel alienated by it, not least you may be happy to know some of those who work in the media. Gandhi, although a political opponent of Britain, was always an admirer of its intelligent, liberal temper which in so many ways had formed his own. This week its replacement by an ignorant, patry, joyful vindictiveness was a frightening thing.

The UK's best DVD PC Package

With nothing to pay until Feb 2000

400MHz

10GB

64MB

DVD

3Mb

Our new Family PC package includes this high performance 400MHz DVD PC system with massive 10GB hard disk plus the best 3D graphics and sound, and comes complete with printer, scanner, office suite and much more for a new lowest price of just £998 +VAT.

Buy now and pay nothing until the Year 2000, on our No Deposit, Interest Free option or just £32.85 per month on our Low APR Purchase Plan

AMD K6-2

Microsoft

ATI

AN 10 items for just

£998

£1202.03

£32.85 per month

Powerful 400-2 3D DVD Exec PC

400MHz AMD K6-2 Processor • 10GB hard disk • 64MB SDRAM • 32bit ATI 3D AGP2 Graphics • 3D Movie Technology • SoundBlaster 64 • DVD ROM drive (also functions as fast CD ROM) • 15" digital colour screen • 512K cache • Plus 50K PC modem (also functions as fax) • All standard features including Windows 95, keyboard, mouse, 2000 hours, 2000 hours • All standard features including Windows 95, keyboard, mouse, 2000 hours, 2000 hours • All standard features including Windows 95, keyboard, mouse, 2000 hours, 2000 hours

PLUS Printer

Epson Stylus 300 colour inkjet printer (RPP £115) • Choice of printer cables at your cost.

PLUS Scanner

Advanced A4 colour scanner also works as a photo scanner and fax machine (RPP £115)

PLUS 14 day money back guarantee

PLUS 1000 hours warranty

PLUS 24 hour technical support

PLUS 3 year parts and labour warranty

PLUS 3 year parts and labour warranty

PLUS 3 year parts and labour warranty

For help & advice on choosing the right PC, call into your local Time store, speak to our advisors and pick up your FREE video pack.

Choose from TWO finance options

1. Pay Nothing Until Feb 2000
12 Months Interest Free Option

0% APR 1 YR
26% APR 4 YRS

2. Time Low APR Purchase Plan

14% APR 1 YR
14% APR 4 YRS

we're on your side

give your loved one a ring on valentine's day

up 2 you

pay as you go

only £69.99 including £20 of calls

With Valentine's Day so near, giving an 'Up 2 You' mobile phone from One 2 One is an ideal way to keep in touch with your loved one.

Your Valentine will have no bills to pay or contracts to sign. And 'Up 2 You' is great value, with £20 worth of calls included* and a voicemail answering service that lets you pick up messages for free – something no other network offers.

So if you want to sweet talk someone on the 14th – and be in with a chance of winning a romantic weekend for two in Paris – now's the time to give us a ring.

order now for free delivery in time for valentine's day

0800 231 121

one 2 one

quoting ref no: DN5074

*£10 voucher included in package, plus extra £10 airtime when your first credit is applied during February or March 1999. For continuous service a minimum £20 credit required every 90 days. Terms and conditions for £20 airtime apply. See insert for details. Order must be placed by 8.29.99 to guarantee delivery by 12.2.99. Price draw open to UK residents (aged 18 or over) except employees of One 2 One and their families, agents or anyone else connected with the promotion. No purchase necessary. Closing date for entries is 28.2.99. For full terms and conditions please write to: Creative Services, One2One, Imperial Place, 2 Maxwell Road, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 1EA

Dying friend saved me, says climber

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH

A CLIMBER WHO saw his friend die of hypothermia as they lay stranded together on a mountain ridge for six days, said yesterday that he owed his life to his companion.

Jamie Andrew, who suffered severe frostbite in all his limbs, was plucked by helicopter from a ridge on Les Droites, in the Mont Blanc range on Sunday. Mr Andrew's friend, Jamie Fisher, 28, died in the freezing temperatures.

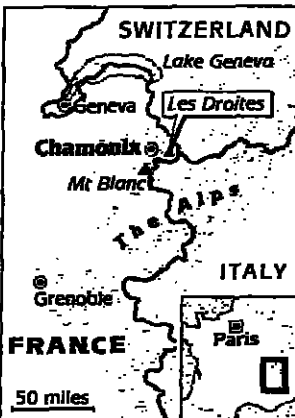
Speaking from his hospital bed for the first time since his ordeal, Mr Andrew, 29, said: "The one thing that kept us going was our friendship."

"We buoyed each other up. On several occasions we had to keep each other going to survive. Sadly, only I made it."

Mr Andrew, who may have to have parts of his fingers, ears, and toes amputated, was too ill to speak before yesterday.

His father, Howard, who flew out from the family's home in Glasgow to be at his son's bedside in Chamonix, said that his son had been either fully asleep or drowsy for most of the week.

But yesterday he had recovered enough to talk to the *Daily Record* about the accident and said he was not afraid of amputation. "The loss of my hand is far sadder to me than any injury that I have sus-



SWITZERLAND
Lake Geneva
Chamonix
Les Droites
Mt Blanc
FRANCE
Paris
50 miles

tained myself. I am not a hero. If anything I am slightly tough. I wanted to get out alive. There is nothing heroic about that."

The two men, who shared a flat in Edinburgh, set off from Chamonix in eastern France 12 days ago. Their aim was to tackle the Droites peak, in the Mont Blanc range.

They were forced to halt on the 13,000ft ridge when they became trapped in a sudden storm which blew up as they tried to descend from the mountain. The men, both experienced climbers, dug a snowhole under their bivouac as temperatures fell to minus 30C and 20ft snow drifts built up.

The alarm was raised in Chamonix but when rescuers attempted to reach the climbers by air, winds gusting

at 85mph or more pushed their aircraft back.

Finally the weather improved enough for a close approach and a wire was lowered from a helicopter to the mountain ridge and Mr Andrew and his friend's body were flown off.

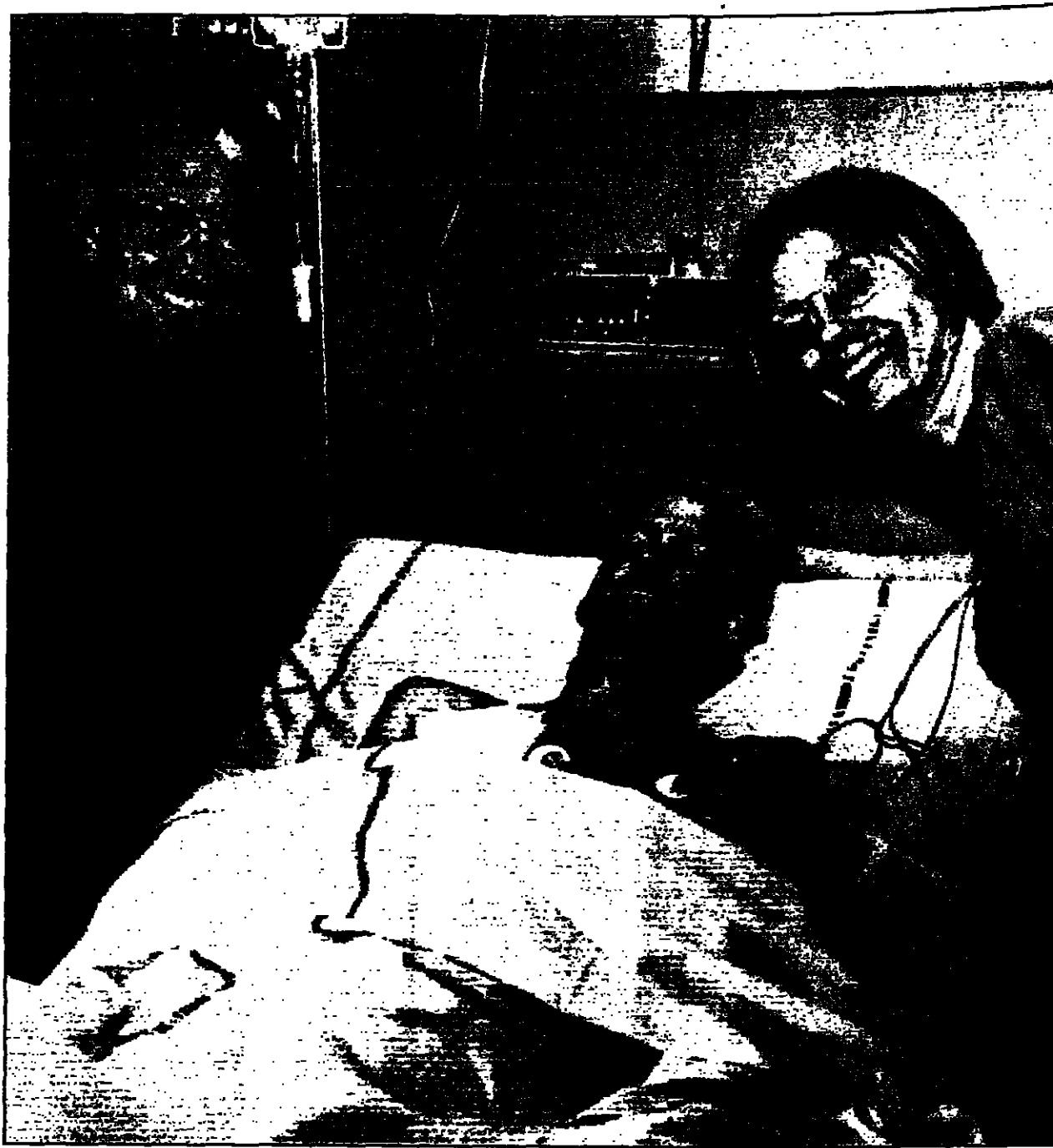
Mr Andrew, an engineer who works in the North Sea oil industry, said yesterday that he had not expected to survive the ordeal and praised his rescuers. "The rescue services were incredible. They were totally magnificent and it is a miracle that they managed to get me off at all. They managed an incredible job."

"The conditions were unexpectedly bad. I have never experienced anything as bad for so long. It just didn't stop. There was nothing we could do except wait for help to arrive."

Mr Andrew said he did not know if he would be able to climb again but vowed to remain active whatever happened.

The two men were regarded as two of Scotland's best climbers and had tackled routes previously thought to be unattainable.

Mr Fisher, who has two brothers, was a care worker with the charity Barnardo's in Edinburgh and, like Mr Andrew, was a former president of the University of Edinburgh mountaineering club.



Jamie Andrew with his girlfriend, Anna Wyatt, and father, Howard, at the hospital in Chamonix Gordon Jack

Doctors at Chamonix Hospital, who have dealt with similar cases of serious frostbite, are hoping to save Mr Andrew's blackened hands and feet. But he must wait for a few more

days before the full extent of his injuries can be assessed. "It's a very long process," Mr Andrew said. "I am not trying to deceive myself about the extent of my injuries."

"I know they are bad and I know there are still major hurdles to overcome. I've got an awful lot of treatment to undergo. I've got very severe frostbite in all four of my

limbs and I am still fairly numb. I am not in much pain but I can tell it is going to be a very long process. I can't say I am making a recovery apart from the fact that I have thawed out."

Now it's the technically modified Teletubby

CHILDREN in future will probably have a diet consisting of chips with everything - in their

ys, that is. Playthings are undergoing a revolution. Tomorrow's adults are already getting used to an idea that their parents find strange - of animate objects which respond to them, based on the computer chips inside them.

A massive toy fair in New York which begins this weekend will see the unveiling of Teletubbies with built-in processors. When a child squeezes them, they will giggle or say up to 20 different phrases. Meanwhile, screens in their bellies in show games or puzzles.

The new Teletubbies are the result of a joint project between Microsoft, the software

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

giant, and Itsy Bitsy Entertainment, the US distributor for the toys. "Children will come to consider them their first technological friend," said Itsy Bitsy boss Kenn Viselman.

But such "technological friends" are increasingly common. As the price of computer chips has plummeted in the past two decades, it has become possible to incorporate them even into toys for the mass market which might only be in fashion for a year or so. Last year saw the Furby, a chip-controlled doll which mewed and giggled. A couple of years ago there was Buzz Lightyear, whose chip-generated voice

announced that he was heading "To infinity - and beyond!"

The most noticeable chip-controlled toy has been Barney, produced by Microsoft's Activision division. The purple dinosaur can be programmed to react to the TV, a computer and even sites on the Internet. But the Teletubbies will be for a newer generation who will not be surprised if there isn't a chip in their toy.

Yet this will not create a nation of computer maniacs. Psychologists reckon that such toys can be positive for children, because they encourage communication.

"Children do a lot of pretend playing, which is very important in early childhood," said Jennifer Smith, a former psychol-

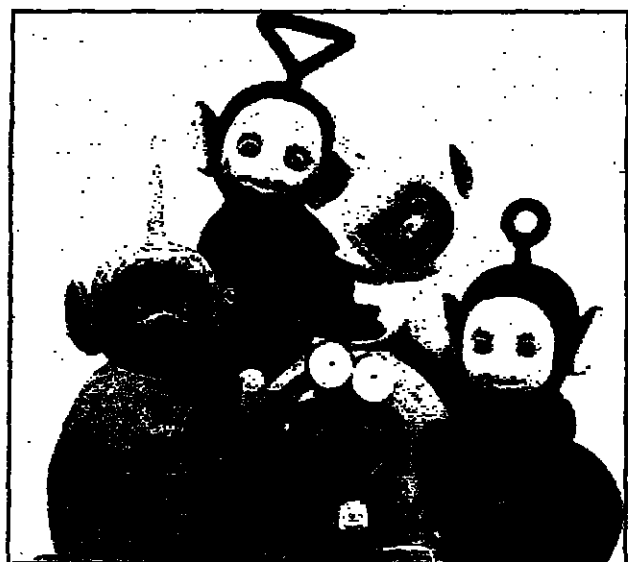
ogy lecturer at Middlesex University who specialises in early learning. "Even with a toy that doesn't speak, you'll see a child pretend that their teddy bear is talking back to them, holding imaginary conversations."

With toys which do react to the child, "they take the idea on board very rapidly," Dr Smith said. "But they also soon realise that there is a limited range of interaction, that some phrase has come up before. Eventually, that toy will go to the place where all the others do."

The pressure to go electronic is also affecting traditional toys. Lego, the Danish company best known for its toy bricks, announced last month that it was cutting a tenth of its 10,000 workforce worldwide, as

the huge growth in computer games has put pressure on sales of plastic bricks that don't do anything if left on their own. To today's child, that can seem a tad dull.

To counter that, the company last summer launched its Mindstorms "programmable bricks" aimed at children aged over 12. Designed with the help of professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the bricks could be programmed from a computer. Lego intends to follow that up with programmable bricks that do not need a computer: they will store their own list of activities. "I think we will see chips built in to more and more toys," said a spokesman for Lego UK.



The original version of the Teletubbies toys

Retail rages save money

BY EILEEN MURPHY

STORES HAVE been losing up to a quarter of what women shoppers would spend on a trip due to the antics of their male partners trying to get out of the shop, a survey has revealed.

The survey by retail analysts David J Peek Associates, asked shoppers all over the country what annoyed them most about their partner while shopping.

Women were described as the "driving force" behind most shopping trips but said outings were frequently sabotaged by a bored and disaffected male.

Among the most frequent complaints were men getting annoyed when their partners did not grab the first thing to hand and dash to the cash till. Men were also accused of always wanting to buy the cheapest thing on offer, using traffic and lack of parking to get out of shopping and sulking when they missed football or rugby on the television. Other tricks included putting on a show of "road rage" at the start of the trip to create a bad atmosphere.

Many men got children to support them by reminding them what they could be doing if they were not shopping, and male partners also made observations that undermined women's confidence when asked for advice, the study said.

The same women said that when their partners offered constructive advice and support they spent as much as 25 per cent more than they intended.

Women's tactics for curtailing a tour of men's shops were far more subtle and emotional. The men told how their partners would complain of tiredness, aching feet and just "not being well" or pretend they were worried about the children or where the car was parked.

The plaintive cry of "Does my bum look big in this?" before complaining about the answer also drove men mad, researchers found. Men also hated having to look at everything in the shop and women disappearing after reaching the head of the queue to look at something else. But men agreed that if their partners were more supportive they would spend more.

The author David Peek said: "A typical successful strategy was initiated years ago when it was realised that children are serious shopping saboteurs. Retailers introduced play areas, crèches and other facilities."

"But now I believe it is the time to introduce play areas for grown-ups - imaginative places where the disaffected partner can be parked happily while shopping goes on."



HALF PRICE SALE

PLUS FREE FULLY INTEGRATED DISHWASHER* worth £619 WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £3,500

OR FREE AMERICAN FRIDGE FREEZER** worth £899 WHEN YOU SPEND OVER £4,500

10% OFF CORIAN AND GRANITE WORKTOPS

- Fantastic savings on the entire Magnet range of kitchen and bedroom cabinets
- Service that's second to none
- Optional stainless steel dynamic drawer system on most kitchens
- Wide range of worktops including solid granite and corian
- Great deals on and Whirlpool appliances

No one else offers as much. But then no one else offers kitchens that are designed for living, built for life. Your life.

CALL 0800 192 192

For details of your nearest show room. Please quote reference IN1918

Magnet

Designed for living BUILT FOR LIFE

www.magnet.co.uk

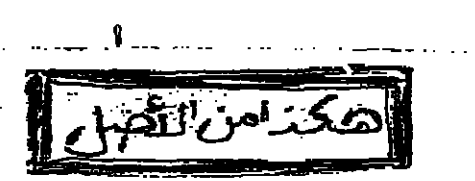
FREE 3D COLOUR DESIGN AND PLANNING SERVICE

10 YEAR GUARANTEE ON OUR UNIQUE BOND CARCASSES

EXPERT FITTING BY MASTER INSTALLERS

FLEXIBLE PAYMENT SCHEMES AVAILABLE

Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm. Selected branches open until 8.00pm on Thursday and 10.00am-4.00pm on Sunday. Check each branch for details.



Madchester flares up again as Mondays hit the road

BY PAUL MCCANN
AND KEYS WILLIAMS

SIX YEARS after they packed up their baggy flares in a whirl of street drugs and recriminations, the Happy Mondays are back. The Hacienda may be closed and the quality of ecstasy diminished, but the fast turn-around of musical trends means the band is reforming to cash in on "Madchester" nostalgia just six years after it split up.

The Mondays, with the Stone Roses and the Hacienda nightclub, were the epicentre of the Madchester or "baggy" scene. A fusion of ecstasy, Acid House beats, rock music and some of the worst haircuts seen in Britain since the Plantagenets, the Madchester phenomenon peaked between 1988 and 1992. It even made the cover of *Time* magazine.

Then, like all youth trends, it was quickly gone, leaving behind some great music, a bastard child called "Britpop" and some very frazzled brain cells. Infamous lead singer Shaun Ryder has decided to reform the band for financial reasons. The former heroin and crack



STONE ROSES

Their eponymous debut album sold 500,000 copies and they are credited with originating the "Madchester" sound. A second album took five years to record and disappointed. Lead man Ian Brown, recently jailed for "drugs", is now solo. John Squires is in the Seahorses; bass player Gary "Mani" Mounfield left to join Primal Scream.



HAPPY MONDAYS

Formed in 1984 in Manchester. Disbanded early 1993. Reforming for financial reasons with the Ryder brothers Shaun and Paul, drummer Gaz Whelan, backing vocalist Rowetta and new members Wags - from Shaun's last group, Black Grape - and solo John Squires in the Seahorses. Bass player Gary "Mani" Mounfield left to join Primal Scream.



INSPIRAL CARPETS

Formed in Manchester in 1980 initially as The Furs. Noel Gallagher was their ringleader. The band faded away without a record deal, rather than splitting up in acrimony like others from the scene. They were defined by their Hammond organ sound, so it is not surprising that the organist, Clint Boon, is the only one with a solo career.



CHARLATANS

Formed in Cheshire in late 1989 as a quintet. Number one with first album. Still intact, with the exception of the keyboard player, Rob Collins, who died in a car crash in 1996. The band had a number-one album as late as 1995, long after the death of the baggy scene. Last year's album produced two hits, "North Country Boy" and "The Only One I Know".



808 STATE

The band came out of the Madchester baggy scene but was much closer to the rave culture of the "Summer of Love". Techno-rave-rock; once described as "Tangerine Dream on speed". Their song "Pariah State" became one of the anthems of 1989. They have survived as remix artists and are still regulars at events such as Tribal Gathering.



JAMES

Although their existence pre-dates Madchester, their lift-off single, "Sit Down" - complete with flowery T-shirts and baggy trousers - came smack in the middle. After a brief but dangerous flirtation with stadium rock on their *Seven* album, they rediscovered their roots after teaming up with Brian Eno for *Land*. Still together, still very successful.

addict faces a large tax bill and his last band, Black Grape, split acrimoniously in 1997. The band will play a four-date tour starting in Manchester in April. If the gigs go well, more are planned. The group has yet to decide whether to make a new album: "We'll put

a show on, play some tunes, and hope it sounds good," said Mr Ryder yesterday. "Hopefully the tour will be rock and roll. If it turns into rock and Status Quo we'll have to finish it."

Shaun's brother, Paul Ryder, and the drummer, Gaz Whelan, are playing on the tour, and backing vocalist, Rowetta, is back. But the guitarist, Mark Day, and the keyboard player, Paul Davis, are no longer in the band. Crucially Mark "Bez" Berry, the band's non-staging, non-musical mascot, who merely walked around on stage with his hood up, will be joining

the tour. Shaun Ryder claims Bez asked for £50,000. "We got him down to £500. Well, £500 and a free T-shirt."

The Happy Mondays collapsed in March 1993 when infighting, prodigious drug consumption and a chaotically recorded final album brought down its record label, Factory Records - another key component in the Madchester scene.

"Their legacy is massive because it was the first time that rock music embraced dance culture," says John Molvey, deputy editor of the music magazine, *NME*. "From being pronounced dead by the cognoscente of the house scene, rock embraced dance and dance embraced rock."

"The Mondays also provided a new spin on the old rock 'n' roll excesses. Music pundits need characters to renew old articles of faith and refresh old values."

Teachers to boycott appraisal system

THE LARGEST teachers' union yesterday threatened a series of rolling one-day strikes over the proposed "payment by results" and warned that its members would boycott performance appraisals next year. Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said the union would take the action to stop annual "MoT" tests for teachers being turned into a way of imposing performance-related pay. The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) also threatened a boycott of the annual appraisal, claiming yesterday that it would "swamp schools with bureaucracy". Mr McAvoy said: "If the Government is determined to ignore the views of teachers, it will antagonise teachers. There could be half-day action, one-day or rolling strikes in the hope that between September this year and September next year the Government will change its position."

Nigel de Gruchy, the general secretary of NASUWT, said the union would negotiate over the changes, but warned: "It is prudent to prepare plans to defend teachers against the totally unmanageable impositions which seem, unfortunately, to be emerging from the Green and technical papers. If that can only be achieved by direct action, then so be it."

Headteachers and employers also attacked the proposals as unworkable, while the other major classroom unions hardened their position.

Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "I think that there will be widespread civil disobedience in schools unless the Government listens to the teachers' points of view. The Tower of London is not big enough to contain all the refusals."

David Blunkett, the Secre-

tary of State for Education, said the Government was proposing a "modern performance system, based on a range of factors including, but not exclusively, targets and results". Writing in *The Times Educational Supplement*, he said: "Most parents - and teachers - would rightly say that teachers should, can and do make a big difference to the achievement of their pupils."

At stake is the most fundamental reform of the way teachers are assessed and paid for 100 years. Under the proposals, teachers will only progress up the pay scale if they pass an annual appraisal by their head teacher. To pass, teachers must be judged against annual targets, both for their own work and the exam performance of their pupils.

Once teachers get to the top of the classroom pay-scale, currently £23,000, they can apply to take a tougher test to pass a performance and pay "threshold". Headteachers will recommend who should pass, but nationally trained assessors will have the final say. Teachers who pass stand to gain a 10 per cent pay rise, and access to salaries up to £40,000. But they will have to sign new contracts giving up restrictions on the length of the working year. According to the Green Paper, a majority will pass, but a "substantial minority" will not.

Senior government sources said it would be "extraordinary for a teachers' union to suggest to its members that they should oppose arrangements which would enable them to gain a pay increase of around £2,000 a year."

Council workers reject 2% rise

LEADERS OF 1.4 million local government workers yesterday rejected a 2 per cent pay offer, branding it "derisory". Union officials turned down the opening offer from council employers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in response to a claim for a 5 per cent or £500 increase, whichever was greater. Further talks will be held on 23 February ahead of an April settlement date.

Virginia Branney, deputy head of local government for Unison, the public sector workers' union, said: "This is a disgraceful and derisory offer

which the trade union side has rejected. We urge the employers to think again."

Mick Graham, head of local government for the GMB general workers' union, said: "The offer is completely unacceptable in the light of the pay awards announced earlier this week for other public-sector workers."

A spokesman for the employers said the offer would add £260m to the pay bill, and added that under a previous agreement workers' hours will be cut from 39 to 37 from April.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. Lines are open from 9 to 6 weekdays and from 10 to 3 weekends. Northern Rock plc are introducer representatives of the Legal & General marketing group members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of making introductions to other representatives for recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name. Subject to status. Applicants must be 23+. Written quotations available. The secured loan requires mortgage security; the drawdown loan is unsecured. A life policy may be required. To help maintain our service standards calls may be recorded. 8773A

HALF PRICE SALE

Magnet

Currys

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST ELECTRICAL STORES

PLUS FURTHER REDUCTIONS

ALL

NEXT DAY DELIVERY EVEN ON SUNDAYS*

DISHWASHERS SAVE UP TO £40

ARISTON Full Size Dishwasher
Model AF3005S
Was £439.99
In-store Price £399.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

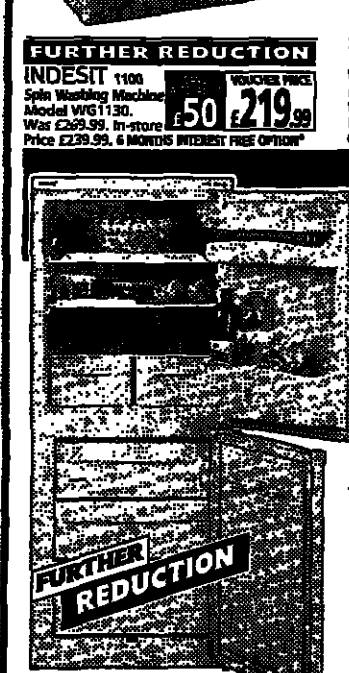
TRICITY BENDIX Full Size Dishwasher
Model D1101W
Was £279.99
In-store Price £249.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



LAUNDRY SAVE UP TO £130

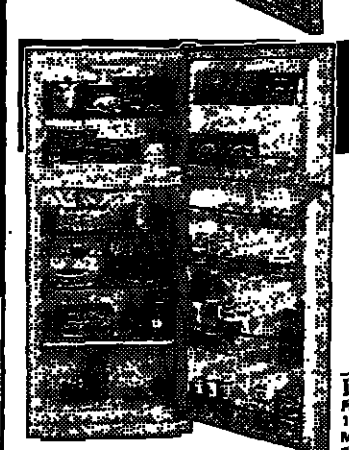
BOSCH 1000 Spin Washing Machine
■ 'A' rated wash performance.
■ 'A' rated energy efficiency.
■ 21 programmes.
Model WFF2001.
Was £549.99. In-store Price £469.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model WFF2001
Was £469.99
In-store Price £379.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



WHIRLPOOL 1000 Spin Washing Machine
Model AWM 3212
Was £299.99. In-store Price £239.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model AWM 3212
Was £239.99
In-store Price £179.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



REFRIGERATION SAVE UP TO £50

HOOVER 7.6 cu.ft. Fridge Freezer
Glass Shelves.
Model HM22C.
Was £349.99. In-store Price £279.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model HM22C
Was £279.99
In-store Price £199.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



AMERICAN STYLE REFRIGERATION

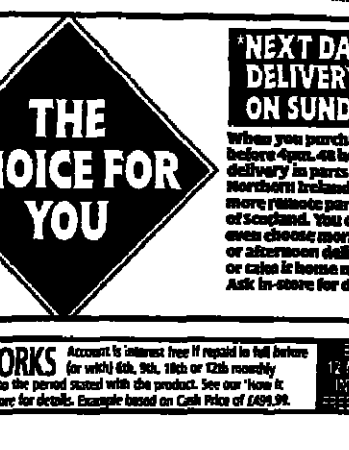
LG 16.8 cu.ft. American Style Frost-Free Fridge Freezer
Model GR572TVE.
Was £649.99. In-store Price £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model GR572TVE
Was £599.99
In-store Price £499.99
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



WHIRLPOOL 22.6 cu.ft. American Style Frost-Free Fridge Freezer
Model GR572TVE.
Was £649.99. In-store Price £599.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

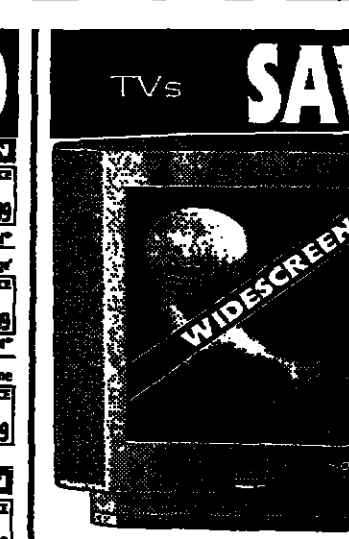
FURTHER REDUCTION
Model GR572TVE
Was £599.99
In-store Price £499.99
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



MICROWAVES SAVE UP TO £80

DAEWOO 1.8 cu.ft. Microwave
Model M197C.
Was £179.99. In-store Price £99.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model M197C
Was £99.99
In-store Price £19.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



TVs SAVE UP TO £200

SONY 28" Widescreen TV with Dolby Pro-Logic Surround Sound
■ 56cm Visible Screen Size. ■ Fastest.
Model KV28WS2. Was £829.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model KV28WS2
Was £829
In-store Price £629
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



MATSUI 21" Widescreen TV
Model M21WS2.
Was £299.99. In-store Price £199.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model M21WS2
Was £199.99
In-store Price £149.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



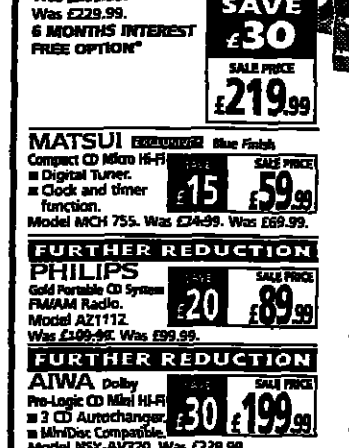
JVC 21" Widescreen TV
Model JVC-21WS2.
Was £299.99. In-store Price £199.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model JVC-21WS2
Was £199.99
In-store Price £149.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



HITACHI 8mm Camcorder with 2.5" LCD Screen
■ 16x zoom.
■ 0.8 lux low light capability.
Model VME-543E.
Was £469.99.
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model VME-543E
Was £469.99
In-store Price £369.99
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



MATSUI 4-Head Hi-Fi
Model M4H1.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £149.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model M4H1
Was £149.99
In-store Price £99.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*



SONY 4-Head Hi-Fi
Model M4H1.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £149.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model M4H1
Was £149.99
In-store Price £99.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

free serve
for free unlimited internet access
Pick up a free disc in-store today!
The fast and easy way to a fully featured Internet Package for the cost of a local call
www.freeserve.net

NEW THIS WEEK

2 DAYS ONLY
OFFER ENDS SUNDAY 17th FEB 1999

FREE
PRINTER & SCANNER
WITH THIS PC

PACKARD BELL
Intel Celeron 400MHz Multimedia PC with 56k Modem
■ 64Mb SD-RAM/5.4Gb hard drive.
■ 32-speed CD-ROM. Model PULSAR C400.
In-store Price £1275.97.
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model PULSAR C400
Was £1275.97
In-store Price £975.97
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

GAMES SAVE UP TO £60

NINTENDO 64 Games
Model N64-64.
Was £199.99. In-store Price £139.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model N64-64
Was £139.99
In-store Price £79.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

FIRES SAVE UP TO HALF PRICE

WHITE KNIGHT Electric Fire
■ 2kW Heat Output.
■ Real Flame Effect.
Model HALCYON.
Was £249.99.

FURTHER REDUCTION
Model HALCYON
Was £249.99
In-store Price £169.99
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*

CLEARANCE MASSIVE SAVINGS
ON EX-DISPLAY MODELS THROUGHOUT THE STORE
CHECK YOUR LOCAL STORE FOR AVAILABILITY

SAVE UP TO £120 ON EX-DISPLAY TVs

SAVE UP TO £80 ON EX-DISPLAY HI-FI

SAVE UP TO £100 ON EX-DISPLAY CAMCORDERS

THE CHOICE FOR YOU

NEXT DAY DELIVERY EVEN ON SUNDAYS

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST RANGE

PEACE OF MIND

DEMONSTRATION ROOMS

DIGITAL COMPATIBLE

PC PLUS HELPLINE 7 DAYS A WEEK

INSTANT CREDIT

ORDER DIRECT FREEPHONE 0500 304304

LOWEST PRICES ON THE SPOT

APR 29.5%

The animal liberationist with attitude

MARY FRETWELL seems a very nice woman. At first, she is 58 and has been a career wife and mother for most of her life. She is well-connected. Her husband was Our Man in Paris for some time. She even owns a basset hound named Claude. But first impressions can be misleading. This is the woman who has changed the Government's mind about rabies and quarantine. This is the woman who, four years ago, started Passports for Pets, which now boasts 10,000 members. It does not take long to decide that Lady Fretwell may indeed be nice and even rather fun, but most of all she is formidable. She suggests alternative descriptions for her fight to change the quarantine laws. Determined? Persistent? Her secretary mentions indefatigable. "Legitimacy is important," says Lady Fretwell. "I don't want to be thought of as a dear old biddy, a sort of dogooder on animal rights." The chances of this are zero. Soon I find myself agreeing with her. It seems impossible not to.

She also seems to have this effect on the Ministry for Agriculture. Last autumn, a minister told the House he had been advised that any change in the system could not take place until, perhaps, 2002. "Three years!" said Lady Fretwell. "It could be done in three months!" And now, the word is that a pilot vaccination scheme could be in place by the end of this year. In political terms this is faster than the speed of light.

"They know that it is not going to go away. I mean it is just not. We started off like a little nudge, being annoying. Now we are thousands of little nudges, annoying everybody all over the place."

Lady Fretwell laughs, as she does all of the time. She is wearing a smart blue suit with a green Passports badge. She is limping because she broke her knee riding. "The Army

lends me a horse," she says, as if this is the most natural thing in the world.

She says one secret of success is never have a committee, and, if you must have one, make sure it does not meet. Passports' office is in the basement of her Wandsworth home, which is a rather grand affair. I press a bell originally marked "servants" to get in. This puts the basset into a frenzy. "He's loud. He's a rescue. Ignore him," says Lady Fretwell.

Her enemies are not gracious. "Everyone thinks the sun shines out of her backside. All this praising, praising!" says Guy Tarpin of the Quarantine Kennels Owners' Association. "But what is success? She's made herself a massive publicity icon. But she hasn't dealt in the truth."

This would make Lady Fretwell snort. She says that Passports for Pets has to be meticulously accurate in everything it does. At one point she notes how careful she is when people telephone about smuggling pets. "I'm interested in changing the law, not breaking it. We always say that. I'm worried about the kennels calling up and recording."

But she is also realistic about her opponents' clout. One of the first things she did was hire a political lobbyist. She has used democracy for all that it is worth. No MP has escaped letters on this subject. Passports for Pets members are relentless constituents. If they do not like the MP's response, they go to his or her surgery.

Lady Fretwell has the obsessiveness of a campaigner who believes her cause is right, both morally and scientifically. She says originally she had seen quarantine as just another fact of diplomatic life. Then, in 1987, she returned with her husband from Paris and put their basset, Bertie, into a kennel. "They told me not to visit. They do this. They are sneaky buggers! So I didn't. After two months I had a dream. And I never dream. Something said, get up and go. Thank God I did. That dog had given up. Its paws were bleeding and its bark gone. I would go as often as I could and crawl into its cage, sit with it and give it a bone."

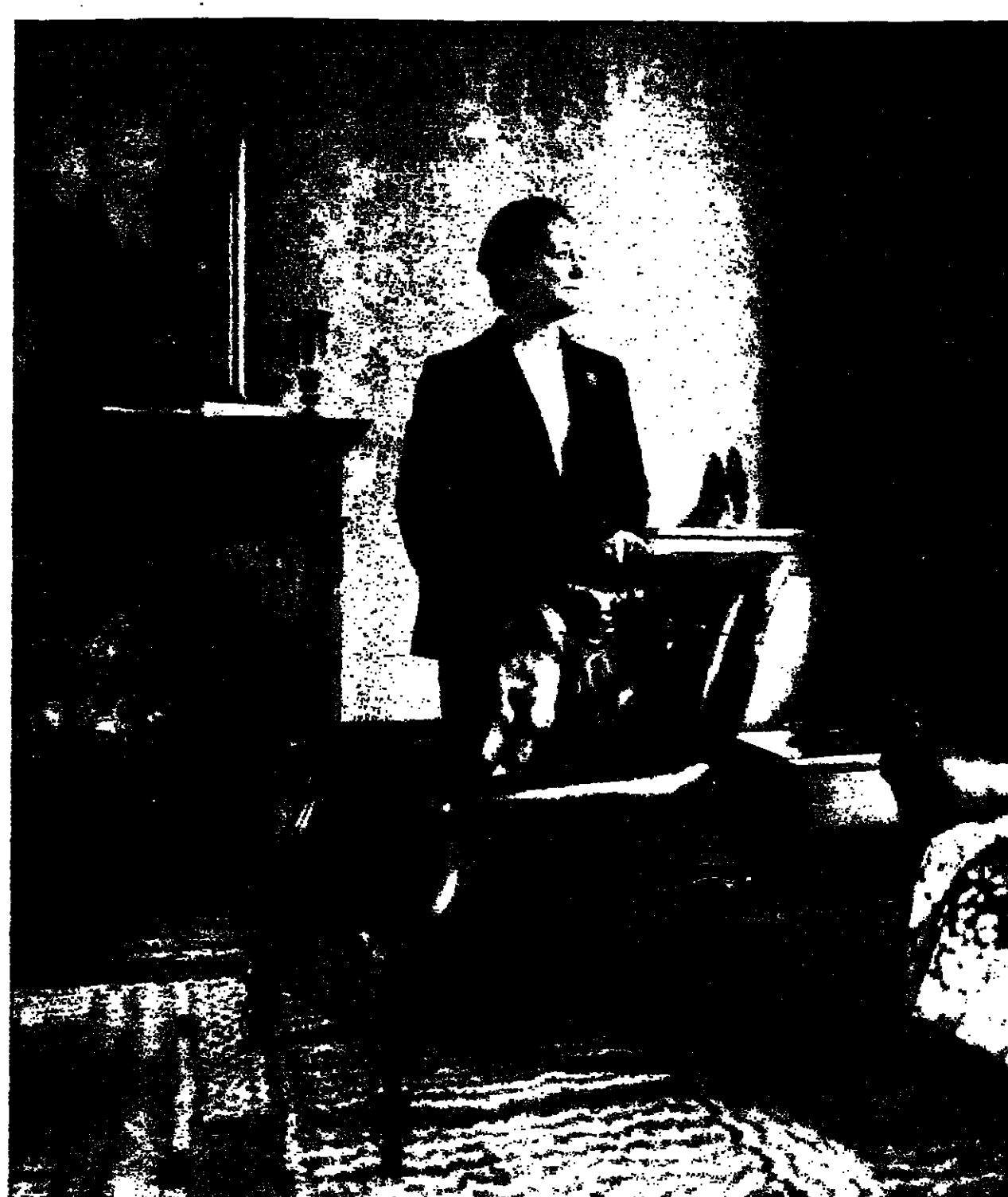
The dog survived but she did not forget the experience. In 1994 she heard that a select committee had come out in support of changing the quarantine system. She phoned her friends and told them to write to their MPs. A few said they should meet. They enlisted "a lord, a vet and a bit of money" for the cause. They printed a notepad. They were off.

She thought it would take eight months but the Tory cabinet then quashed the reform. "We had started, so we continued," Lady Fretwell said. She sees this as a battle and says you always have to watch left, right and centre to see what the opposition is doing. She got the vets to form a group - Vets for a Change - and does their paperwork. The RSPCA used to be against changing the system. So when people called Passports for Pets in tears - as many do when faced with the prospect of quarantine - she passed them on to the RSPCA. In the end, the RSPCA had another look at the issue. Now they campaign together.

Politically, Passports seems rather savvy. Last year, for instance, Labour announced it had appointed a committee to look at the quarantine issue. The names were announced at 10pm. Lady Fretwell said there were no experts and, worse, one man on the committee was against change. By 9am a dossier of this man's public pronouncements was in front of the Minister for Agriculture. "I really do think he was very very grateful," she says. "Otherwise he would have had egg on his

face." The committee was expanded to include two experts.

Then the committee recommended change but said it would require primary legislation - which meant a three-year delay. Passports swung into action. More letters to MPs. A firm of parliamentary solicitors was commissioned to write a report. Passports asked a sympathetic MP to set up a meeting on this with the Agriculture Minister, Nick Brown. That took place, with the RSPCA, last month, with Mr Brown saying he had never



Lady Fretwell (with Claude): Politically savvy, well-organised, persistent and fun. And formidable. Tom Pilsten

Football disaster legal bill disputed

BY MARK WILKINSON

THE FAMILIES of the people who died in the Hillsborough disaster yesterday called on police chiefs to stop funding the legal costs of two former officers facing private prosecution over the deaths.

South Yorkshire Police Authority initially opted to finance the defence costs of former Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield and former Superintendent Bernard Murray. But the Merseyside-based Hillsborough Families Support Group - which is bringing the private prosecution - has challenged the decision, saying it is illegal.

Sheffield MPs Clive Betts and Helen Jackson have also expressed their concern about the payment of the legal fees amid fears that the final bill could run into millions of pounds.

Critics say that money diverted to defend the officers would otherwise be available for day-to-day policing in South Yorkshire. The police authority met yesterday to discuss the issue.

Both Mr Duckenfield and Mr Murray - the two have retired from the force - are accused of unlawful killing and wilful neglect of public duty.

Mr Duckenfield is also accused of intent to pervert the course of justice by lying about the circumstances in which a gate at the ground was opened on the day of the disaster.

As well as the possible expense of a judicial review in the High Court, four weeks has been set aside for a committal hearing at Leeds magistrates' court in April. If the case continues to a lengthy Crown Court trial, the total legal bill could run into millions of pounds.

The Hillsborough Family Support Group, which has set aside £500,000 for its costs, has already asked the district auditor to investigate the legality of the police authority's decision to fund the defence costs.

The disaster happened in April 1989 when 96 Liverpool fans lost their lives at the FA Cup semi-final match against Nottingham Forest.

RES

NS

free serve

unlimited

free disc

THIS WEEK

FREE

PRINTER & SCANNER WITH THIS

SAVE £60

SAVE £60

SAVE HALF PRICE

CLEARANCE MASSIVE SAVINGS

SAVE SAVE SAVE

£120 £80 £100

LOWEST PRICES ON THE SPOT

Send a Valentine message to your loved one and you could WIN a weekend for two at Grayshott Hall

"In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love", wrote Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and once again this year The Independent will be publishing your romantic, mysterious, funny and just plain daft messages to your loved one (and of course you don't have to be young or a man to indulge). In time for Valentine's Day we will send on your behalf an anonymous card telling the recipient to look for his/her personal message in The Independent on Sunday.

The sender of the best and most original message published will win a fabulous weekend for two at Grayshott Hall Health Fitness Retreat in Surrey - the former country home of Tennyson - and the runner-up will win a midweek two-night stay for two.

So just compose your message, follow the instructions below - and then you can start dreaming of two days unwinding with your loved one in beautiful, relaxing surroundings, revitalising your bodies with rejuvenating hydrotherapy, swimming together in the heated indoor pool, getting back into trim in the gym, enjoying natural therapies...and, of course, delicious and healthy food!

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

YOUR DETAILS (in capitals)		YOUR VALENTINE'S DETAILS (in capitals)	
Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Postcode		Postcode	
Daytime Telephone		Daytime Telephone	

Write your message above in capital letters, and tick your option (all prices inclusive of VAT)

If in a foreign language please attach English translation.

8 words for £9.95 + extra words at £1.25 each ☐

3cm x 1 column box advert for £50 ☐

As above plus extra commissions at £15 each ☐

I enclose a cheque made payable to Newspaper Publishing PLC, or please debit for the amount of £.....

my Visa/Mastercard/AMEX number..... expiry date.....

Post this coupon to: The Independent Valentine, Classified Dept.

One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

or telephone 0171 293 2000 between 9.30 - 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

ALL MESSAGES TO BE RECEIVED BY 12 NOON WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY.

If you do not wish to be sent details on products or services as recommended by the Independent please tick here ☐

easy@demon[no.1]

make a square by moving just one match.

what could be easier than that? getting on-line with demon of course. we've made it so easy, anyone can do it. just call us on 0800 027 9196 or scribble your name and address anywhere on this ad and send it to us at freepost demon (yes, that's all you have to write). we'll send you our free 30-day trial cd. it doesn't get any easier than that.

Demon Internet
0800 027 9196

www.demon.net email: sales@demon.net

'If the Kosovo talks don't work, then we'll all join the KLA'

Briton to lead Nato troops

By RAYMOND WHITAKER
in Lausa, Kosovo

"HE'S SCARED to sit next to me because I'm in the Kosovo Liberation Army," Gani Gecaj, 31, jeers at his brother, Fadil. "He wants peace in Kosovo, but he's scared to sit next to me." Thirty-eight-year-old Fadil shrugs equally: that's Gani for you.

Many families will recognise the relationship - the passionate younger sibling, always bursting to break in when anyone else is talking, and his more philosophical senior, who recognises that allowances must be made.

In Kosovo, however, where ethnic Albanians such as the Gecaj family are struggling to break free of Serbian domination, such differences are a matter of life and death.

The bearded, loud-voiced Gani is in Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) uniform, his rifle across his knees. He boasts of having taken part in the group's first-ever attack on the Serbs, the shooting of a policeman in 1992.

Fadil, clean-shaven and in civilian dress, is a leading member in his district of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the main Albanian political party, which has consistently advocated a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Serb-ruled province.

The debate between them will be mirrored at the chateau of Rambouillet, near Paris, where the international community has summoned the Serbs and the Albanians today to reach a settlement.

Fadil supports the LDK line, which is to act as though the Serbs have already given up their rule in Kosovo. The party held a referendum in 1991 that overwhelmingly called for independence and conducted elections, using private homes as polling stations, in which Kosovo's 90 per cent Albanian majority chose Ibrahim Rugova, the LDK leader, as their "president".

But the Serbs did not go away and the KLA emerged from the shadows in 1997 to take a more direct and bloody route to independence. Its attacks provoked a massive Serbian response last year that devastated the province, killing more than 2,000 people and driving hundreds of thousands more from their homes. But they also did more to persuade the rest of the world to intervene than all the LDK's years of patient attempts at negotiation.

"There are two ways to solve this problem," says Fadil. "The KLA chose a short cut, while the LDK took a step-by-step approach which avoids fighting."



Philosophical Fadil (left) and passionate Gani Gecaj at home in Lausa, where the Kosovo Albanians explain their differences and fundamental solidarity David Rose

"We tried that way for years," Gani cuts in, "but we got nowhere."

"We have the same aim," says this brother, "ever the peacemaker. It is true that the KLA made things go faster."

Both are bleary-eyed - they admit that they were up until 3am, arguing over exactly the same ground.

To reach the Gecaj brothers, you swing off Kosovo's main east-west highway into the Drenica district, the province's poorest and the worst-damaged in last year's Serbian offensive. Passing the town of Srtica ("Little Serbia"), known to the Albanians as Skenderaj, you reach Lausa, or rather the ruins of the village.

Here the Gecaj clan has its compound, which is as devastated as the rest. We meet in a low, newly constructed house, where the freshly plastered walls are still damp. Fadil and Gani have five other brothers - Halil, 43, who is in Albania; Haxhi, 34, who is in the room but says little, taking what is clearly a familiar role of listening to the others; Nebi, 26, who sends money from Germany; and Nebat and Esat, 24 and 23, who have also joined the KLA.

"This family is famous," says the local school head. "They have always fought for the freedom of Albanians." So oppressive was Serbian rule that Fadil spent 18 months in prison a few years ago for referring to Srtica as Skenderaj in the hearing of a policeman. "They beat him until his head looked like this thing

here," says Gani, indicating the battered wood-burning stove, "and he still chooses peace? That's when I thought that I'd rather go and fight."

There is little room for moderates in this conflict, and even Fadil has a pistol strapped to his hip. "People didn't want to fight in places like Prekaz [scene of the first massacre of civilians in Kosovo, late last year] but the war was imposed on them," he says. "That's the only reason I have this."

Gani cannot resist another jibe: "When the shells were falling on Lausa, they didn't distinguish between the LDK and the KLA." But he adds, more seriously: "War was imposed on me too. I could live better than this: we have a family import-export business as well as the farming. I could take my wife

and children to Germany: we have residence rights there. But I have chosen to stay and fight."

Both brothers know what they want from the Rambouillet talks - independence for Kosovo - but this is not on offer, neither from the Serbian government of Slobodan Milosevic nor from the six-nation "contact group" which has organised the talks.

Fadil, needless to say, is more optimistic. "We are going to show that Albanians know how to be united," he says. "We have a state structure already in place, and now we have international support for it."

"That's just your opinion," retorts Gani. "The KLA doesn't recognise your structure. That is not the reality."

"We are brothers," Fadil sums up. "We see this differently."

Haxhi at last speaks up, saying: "The biggest problem we have are these two. They are always arguing."

But for all their long-contested differences, fraternal solidarity counts most, not only for the Gecaj brothers but for all of Kosovo's Albanians when it comes to Serbian rule, and Fadil's final words serve as a warning of what will happen if Rambouillet is a failure.

"This time, we hope the West and the international community as a whole will find a solution leading to independence for Kosovo," he says.

"If there is no solution this way, we will all join the KLA." At last the brothers are in agreement. "I also hope for the same thing," says Gani.

"We are part of Europe, and if we must, we will fight to join it."

International monitors in Kosovo were trying yesterday to defuse a stand-off in Srtica, 18 miles west of Pristina, where Serbian police were trying to enter rebel territory to investigate a robbery at a Serbian Orthodox monastery.

About eight armoured vehicles were prepared to move to the monastery of Devic, where thieves three days ago made off with farm equipment. KLA rebels refused to let them enter.

Andreas Kern, of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, said that a firefight broke out on Thursday when police tried to approach the monastery, home to nine Serbian nuns.

By JOHN DAVIDSON

BRITISH TROOPS will play a dominant role in the large Nato ground force which allied countries plan to deploy in Kosovo to enforce any peace deal.

From the multinational formation of some 35,000 troops, Britain will contribute about 8,000, equipped with tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery. It is also likely to provide the officer in overall command and most of the command structure.

The whole force will be deployed under Nato's Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). Its headquarters, in Rheindahlen, Germany, would relocate to Kosovo.

ARRC is commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Mike Jackson, and about half of the 1,000 headquarters staff are British. It would be supported by a further 2,000 British troops, mainly from 1 Signals Brigade.

1st Gen Jackson is a former Parachute Regiment commander and has valuable experience in former Yugoslavia. He commanded the British contingent of the Nato Implementation Force (IFOR) when it was sent to Bosnia in 1995.

The remaining British contribution will be built around the 4 Armoured Brigade, based at Osnabruck in Germany; together with artillery, engineers and logistic support. All have been placed on 72 hours' notice to move.

Plans provide for the bulk of troops to start arriving in Kosovo about 10 days after a deal is signed. The Serb delegation to the Rambouillet talks, however, has said it would oppose any Nato ground troops being stationed on its soil.

If the force does go, the first British soldiers into Kosovo are likely to be from the King's Own Royal Border Regiment, which already has a reinforced armoured infantry company with Warrior fighting vehicles near Skopje in Macedonia.

They are part of the 2,300-strong extraction force, under French command, there to facilitate the emergency evacuation of unarmed monitors now in Kosovo on behalf of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Units from 4 Armoured Brigade placed on standby are: the King's Royal Hussars, equipped with Challenger main battle tanks and Scimitar reconnaissance light tanks; an armoured battalion of the Irish Guards; and a company of the Green Howards, both also with Warriors.

The last chance to avoid all-out war

By RUPERT CORNWELL

THE KOSOVO peace conference due to start in Rambouillet today is probably the last chance to avoid a war in the Serbian province, which Western leaders fear could spread across the southern Balkans.

The talks between senior Serb and Yugoslav officials and political and military leaders of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority will be chaired by the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and Hubert Vedrine, the French Foreign Minister. The delegates have been given a fortnight to agree a settlement based on a draft plan drawn up by the US envoy Christopher Hill, granting Kosovo wide autonomy for an interim period of three years.

But no member of the six-nation Contact Group of leading powers, which has convened the conference, is under any illusion. "We have a mountain to climb," Mr Cook said yesterday. There is no guarantee of success, and even if a deal is reached, tens of thousands of Nato ground troops will be needed to make it stick.

An early sign of how difficult things could be came as local Serb officials reportedly refused to permit delegates from the Kosovo Liberation Army to enter the airport at Pristina from where they were to leave for the talks. A French government spokesman said Paris was ready to send a military



Rugova: Non-violent path

plane to make sure participants arrived in time.

The conference - very much a test case for Europe's hopes of forging a stronger diplomatic and military identity - will be opened by President Jacques Chirac. Modelled in part on the Dayton talks which brought peace to Bosnia in 1995, the discussions are likely to begin as "proximity" talks, mediated by Mr Hill, before developing into fully fledged negotiations.

Officially, the Serb/Yugoslav delegation will be led by the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister, Ratko Maršovic, and his opposite number in the federal Yugoslav government, Nikola Sainovic. Both are trusted aides of President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia, who, though not present in Rambouillet, will be pulling the strings from Belgrade.

The Albanian team includes Ibrahim Rugova, political leader of the ethnic Albanians, as well as Azem Syla, said to be a top commander of the KLA, and Jakup Krasniqi, a KLA spokesman and former supporter of Mr Rugova's non-violent path to independence, who switched his support to the movement's military wing.

Rivalry between Mr Rugova and the KLA is but one problem bedevilling the talks. Even if they find a common voice, there remains the abyss separating the ethnic Albanians' demand for independence and Belgrade's insistence that Kosovo remains a part of Serbia. Nor is it certain that the Serbs will accept Nato peacekeepers on Yugoslav territory.

The Nato force is expected to total between 20,000 and 30,000 men, with the largest contingents provided by Britain and France. Its precise make-up will depend on the size of the Yugoslav security force left in Kosovo after any settlement.

The abortive ceasefire deal negotiated by Richard Holbrooke last October permitted Belgrade to station 10,000 interior ministry troops, with three companies on patrol at any one time, to protect communications. But those terms were honoured only in the breach. "If Belgrade pulls out a lot of troops, and a credible Kosovo police force is set up, then the Nato force could be smaller," one diplomat said.

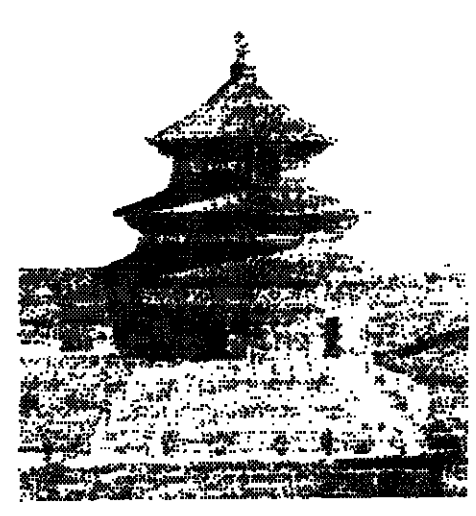
On the Tracks of Marco Polo

PEKING, SHANGHAI, SUZHOU AND GRAND CANAL CRUISE

This is a wonderful opportunity to visit some of the well known sights of ancient and contemporary China at a very moderate tariff. The journey commences with a scheduled flight from London Heathrow to Peking. In Peking stay at the 4-star Holiday Inn Lido Hotel for two nights on full board. Included during our stay are visits to the Great Wall, dinner at a local restaurant and a visit to the famous Peking Opera.

From Peking fly to Shanghai for two nights at the 3-star Zhaoan Hotel including a full sightseeing programme.

From Shanghai we board the train and travel west to the 'Garden City' of Suzhou, stay two nights at the 4-star Aster Hotel where we visit two of the most famous gardens and take a three-hour cruise by launch along the Grand Canal to the 'Silk' town of Wuxi. The following day return by road to Shanghai and fly to Peking in the morning. In the afternoon a visit is made to Tian an Men Square and the Forbidden City with a farewell Peking Duck banquet in the evening. The journey



9 nights from £745

concludes with a return non-stop flight from Peking to London Heathrow arriving the same day as you depart.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

per person in a twin bedded room

1999 Mondays
March 22 £745
March 29 £795.00 - April 12, 26 £795.00
May 10, 24 £795.00 - June 7, 21 £795.00
Single supplement £95.00

The price includes: return air travel, transfers, accommodation as described on a full board basis, sightseeing as indicated, UK airport tax. Not included: visa procurement, travel insurance, tipping and overseas airport taxes. Our current Conditions of Booking in copy of which is available on request shall apply to all reservations.

0171-616 1000



VOYAGES JULES VERNE

21 Dorset Square, London W1V 1QQ
Our offices are open for telephone reservations from 10am to 5pm weekdays & from 10am to 5pm at the weekends. For personal enquiries our office hours are 9am to 5pm weekdays only.

Great Value City Breaks

Enjoy a city break in Europe, for a fantastic price. *The Independent* and Thomson Breakaway have joined forces to offer these great value trips. Over the next nine days, we will be giving you the chance to book your travel and accommodation to a selection of European cities, from Prague to Florence. Today, the city is Paris. The romantic capital of the world, Paris is justifiably proud of its arts, culture, fashion and food. Book now for a city break to remember.

Choose your hotel

Thomson Breakaway features over sixty city centre Parisian hotels from simple 1T hotels to deluxe 5T Select. Unique Thomson T-ratings enable you to compare hotels in different countries and cities, providing an at a glance guide to location, service, facilities, food and comfort. Every hotel has been carefully selected and graded according to detailed assessment by Thomson as well as from analysis of customer satisfaction questionnaires.

To book your European break

Simply call the Thomson Breakaway holiday hotline on 0181 201 4515 immediately, quoting reference COI X01 to make your reservation. The reservation lines will be open from 9am - 5pm on Saturday and Sunday, and between 8am and 9pm on all other days. Then send in four tokens from the 9 that will appear in *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday* between the 6 and the 14 of February (inclusive). To validate your offer, please send the tokens with the completed application form, that

will appear from Tuesday 9 - Sunday 14 February, to The Independent European Break Offer, PO Box 21063, London, N1 8WY. If you would like a brochure, call the brochure hotline on 01509 268 268 quoting reference CBIN05.

What your holiday includes

The price of your holiday is per person based on return Eurostar travel from London Waterloo to Paris for two adults sharing a twin room with continental breakfast. Taxes and a complimentary guidebook are also included.

Additional information

Single rooms are subject to supplement and may be limited in availability. Eurostar upgrades are available at a supplement.

Thomson Paris Welcome Centre

The Thomson Paris Welcome Centre situated in Central Paris, is open 7 days a week all year round providing assistance with tour bookings and restaurant recommendations as well as discount vouchers and general information.

The following is just a small selection of the hotels included in this great offer. Prices are based on 1 or 2 nights although other durations are available at a supplement:

1T Hotels

1nt from £79 / 2nts from £99 e.g. Hotel Nemours
The sculpted facade of the Hotel Nemours is classed as an historical monument. The inside is more simple, but provides a clean, comfortable, friendly base.

Location: Located between Republique and the lively area of Bastille, not far from Pere Lachaise cemetery. Direct Metro line to the left bank.
Facilities: Rooms have shower or bath, cable TV and minibar.

2T Hotels

1nt from £95 / 2nts from £115 e.g. Hotel Glasgow
A relaxing, classical style hotel with easy access to all areas of the city. The rooms are cheerful and benefit from being located on one of Paris' quietest streets.
Location: Within walking distance from the nearest metro and bus

routes on a quiet, residential street.
Facilities: Breakfast room on the reception level, small public lounge area with Chesterfield sofas.

3T Hotels

1nt from £105 / 2nts from £135 e.g. Hotel Tivoli Plaza
The fine arts prints in the Tivoli Plaza compliment the elegant, modern decor. This hotel stands in a quiet location close to numerous shops, restaurants and theatres, not far from the lively Montmartre district.
Location: Situated behind the Galerie Lafayette, around 5 minutes walk to the Opera.
Facilities: Bar, two lounges,

breakfast room, room with satellite TV, minibar, telephone, radio, hair dryer and 24 hour bar.

4T Hotels

1nt from £119 / 2nts from £159 e.g. Hotel Tivoli Plaza
This fine arts print hotel stands a short walk away from the quay where the Seine River cruises depart. Rooms would expect, it offers all the facilities associated with the 4T chain.
Location: Situated 10 minutes from the Opera, 15 minutes from the Eiffel Tower and a few minutes from the Louvre Museum.
Facilities: Bar, two lounges,

breakfast room, room with satellite TV, minibar, telephone, radio, hair dryer and 24 hour bar.

5T Hotels

1nt from £139 / 2nts from £179 e.g. Hotel Tivoli Plaza
This fine arts print hotel stands a short walk away from the quay where the Seine River cruises depart. Rooms would expect, it offers all the facilities associated with the 5T chain.
Location: Situated 10 minutes from the Opera, 15 minutes from the Eiffel Tower and a few minutes from the Louvre Museum.
Facilities: Bar, two lounges,

prints of racehorses adorning the walls leave guests in little doubt of its heritage.

Location: Right next door to the Opera Garnier and the Grands Boulevards, near the Place Vendôme and the exquisite shops of Faubourg St-Honore.
Facilities: Intimate bar, gourmet restaurant, coffee shop, traditionally furnished, stylish bedrooms with satellite TV, airconditioning, minibar, telephone, safety deposit box and hairdryer.

Please note that the above is only a selection of hotels included in the offer.

YOUR CHOICE FROM OVER 50 HOTELS

THE INDEPENDENT

Terms and conditions: Prices are per person and are subject to availability. Applicants must be over 18. All offers must be booked by 28/2/99 for travel up to and including 22/3/99. All holidays are subject to the Fair Trading Charter as detailed in The 1999 Thomson Breakaway Cities brochure. No photocopied tokens. Promoter: Thomson Breakaway.



Token

1

THOMSON

Breakaway

Bordeaux in crisis as buyers lose their bottle

A DEADLY quiet has fallen on the great wine estates of Bordeaux. The silence goes beyond the silence of the sleeping vines.

The telephone is NOT ringing. The gravel of the chateau drive is NOT crunching under the BMW and Audi tyres of the most influential wine brokers and shippers.

After several years of speculative inflation, the bubble in the prices of the finest red wines in the world may be about to burst.

The 1998 vintage – although an excellent year, by all accounts – is being treated with a coolness bordering on glacial frost by the French and foreign wine trade.

Advance bulk sales of last year's top chateau wines, not yet bottled, are due to begin in about six weeks.

By early February the market would normally be buzzing with gossip and pre-negotiation negotiations. Not this year.

"The telephone is not ringing any more. It's almost got to the point where we have to ask our friends to call," said one chateau manager.

"There is no market in fine Bordeaux at the moment. What you have is a poker game. Both sides are waiting for the other to blink first," said Nick Faith, a British wine writer and Bordeaux expert.

In the past four years the cost of the best young Bordeaux

By JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

reds – even moderate-to-good labels – has soared out of the reach of all but the wealthiest wine-lovers.

In 1997, which was reckoned an "average" year (ie pretty bad), the chateau-gate prices of some of the best-known names jumped by 70 per cent.

Some have tripled in price since 1994.

Whatever the price demanded by the producers, the shippers – especially the foreign buyers – continued to buy every bottle on offer, defying the laws of economics (and, perhaps, of common sense). All that may be about to change.

Lower-quality – £4 to £5 a bottle – Bordeaux is little affected. It operates in a different market, with peaks and troughs of its own.

Higher-quality Bordeaux of a drinkable age – say seven years old or more – is subject to the laws of the international wine market. Its price is already tending to sink (though not collapse) because of the Asian recession.

All eyes in the international wine trade are now turned towards the producer-fixed price of the best young clarets, still years away from drinkable age. Until the mid-1990s the second-rank but high-quality labels might have sold off the estate at about £10 to £15 a bottle. Last



Bordeaux by the barrel, but now, after years of speculative inflation, the makers of the finest red wines in the world are facing more uncertain times

David Rose

year they sold at £30 to £40 a bottle (beyond the means of all but the most devoted, cellar-owning claret-lover).

The problem can be summed up in one word: greed. Retail prices for mature, drinkable Bordeaux – and especially for the most sought-after vintages, such as 1982 – were driven up in the 1990s by a boom in Asian demand and a fashion for claret in America, fuelled by the wine guru Robert Parker. Even relatively young wines, three or four years old, were being sold at four times – in the case of Petrus 1994, 10 times – what the chateau had originally charged.

Some time in the mid-1990s the chateau owners – now as likely to be a multinational company as a local family – gazed at these inflated retail

prices and the profits made by the shippers and traders and asked "Why not us? We make the stuff, after all".

They ramped up the asking price for young Bordeaux (primeur) and, having got away with it one year, did it again, the next and the next.

There is, nominally, a "market" in the young, unbottled *crus classes* – claret of superior quality.

In reality, the trend of prices is fixed by the leading estates by processes which are difficult to define, based on a) quality and b) what the producers think they can get away with. If anyone tries to defy the trend, their life, in the words of one shipper, is "made very unpleasant for them".

Jasper Morris, managing director of Morris and Verdin, a

specialist British wine importer, said: "Going around the estates last year, everyone would say 'It's not a good year. I know these prices are too high but my neighbours over there in the next chateau insist on putting up the prices'. You would go to the next chateau and get the same message. It was always the fault of the other chateaux."

For a few years a number of factors sustained the price bubble in young Bordeaux. There were good vintages in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996. There was good demand from "traditional" customers in Europe and the US.

There was feverish demand from "new" customers in Asia (mostly Japan and South Korea).

There was also speculative buying by City traders, hoping

to cash in on the increasing price of the maturing wine.

Last year all the markets fell flat at once.

Cases and cases of the 1997 *récolte* (vintage) of high-class clarets remain unsold in wine traders' cellars all over the world. One British shipper explained: "The 1997 vintage sold easily from the chateaux on to the Bordeaux wine market. It sold with some difficulty to the shippers, who knew it was a poor year. In the end, most people in the business reluctantly went with the flow. A big mistake. It hardly sold to their customers at all."

While these stocks remain on their hands – over 50 per cent in some cases – shippers are reluctant to pay a high price for the 1998 vintage, however good it might turn out to

be. Many growers accept that the prices should come down but they are reluctant to make the first move. It is a late-20th-century reworking of the dilemma of the marriage feast at Cana. How can you agree to sell a good vintage for less than a bad one? Besides, the producers argue, if the 1998 wine goes cheap, there will never be any reason to buy the 1997. Result: deadlock.

One leading Bordeaux wine broker said: "The market is paralysed, immobile. It is clear – and we've been begging the producers to understand this – that the 1998 prices must come down, however good the vintage is."

"Everything we hear suggests that the wine is either good or very good. No matter. The estates have to swallow

their pride to get the market moving again. I believe we need a fall of 30 to 40 per cent – more for the really expensive wines and less for the moderate ones."

The danger is that, while prices remain high, Bordeaux may lose part of its traditional markets in Europe and the US – and even its new market in Asia – to the New World producers now turning out wines of great quality in the claret style.

The Bordeaux broker said: "We are playing with fire. OK, Bordeaux will always be Bordeaux. We are not going to lose our reputation and markets overnight. But enough is enough. The prices were pushed to absurd and unjustifiable levels last year. There must be a correction this time."

family cars aren't expected to be as comfortable as they aren't expected to give you 40mpg, yet so as safe as a larger car, and they're certainly not this isn't any family car, it's the new ford focus

the ford focus 1.6 16v 1.8i 16v zetec

standard equipment includes:
unique "control blade" independent
rear suspension • free choice of 1.6
or 1.8 16v zetec engine • 12 year anti

perforation protection • "new edge" power assisted steering system • power release and safeguard
design with class leading interior space • 10 air vents • 10 speakers • power front windows
space • dynamic safety engineering • 4 wheel disc brakes • 16v zetec engine • 16v zetec engine • 16v zetec engine
including dual air bags • advanced 16v zetec engine • 16v zetec engine • 16v zetec engine

£13,000 or £172 pm at 11.5% APR on Options

climate option pacific air conditioning • "quickclear" windscreen • heated washer jets • electrically operated and heated door mirrors • £500 (incl vat)
reflex option pacific electronic anti lock brakes • electronic brake force distribution • electronic dual mode traction control • side airbags • £500 (incl vat)

the ford focus is also available as a five door estate and four door saloon



Car Of The Year 1999

driver and passenger airbags are standard on the ford focus. driver airbag is standard on every other ford car. always remember to use your safety belt. *official fuel consumption mpg: (1.6) urban 40.7, extra urban 51.4, combined 40.9. **plus deposit and optional
made subject to mileage / condition if the vehicle is returned at the end of the finance agreement. total payable £14,634. term 25 months. 24 monthly payments of £171.26. optional final purchase payment £5,804. guarantees / indemnities may be required.

هكزامن القمبل

Nightmare of Masai Mara comes to end

A WEEK IN THE LIFE
JOHN WARD, NAIROBI

JOHN WARD hates the night flight from Gatwick to Nairobi. He says airlines get away with "dreadful service" because for most people the flight is a once-in-a-lifetime experience to a dream game park destination. Not for him; he has flown to Kenya more times than he can remember over the last 11 years - sometimes two or three times in a month - to doggedly pursue an investigation into the so far unsolved murder of his daughter, Julie, in Kenya's Masai Mara national park.

"Bloody night flights. I hate arriving in cold, murky Gatwick at 4am then driving three hours home to Suffolk. I hate arriving in Nairobi, finding your baggage is lost... then it's into a taxi and straight to the lawyers office," said John Ward.

Sometimes, he does go on to the game park - but not for a once-in-a-lifetime safari. The Masai Mara is his private nightmare, where his 38-year-old daughter was murdered and dismembered, and her remains hidden. It has been his determination alone that has brought two men to trial this month, after years of battling with police cover-ups, reluctant officialdom, obstructive politics and the inefficiency of a corrupt justice system.

ON THURSDAY, the trial is due to begin. False starts have been typical of the process and provoked little more than an ironic raised eyebrow from Mr Ward, although he is sure to get up at seven in the morning to be ready in court at 8.30am. He has



Julie Ward: Killed in the Masai Mara 11 years ago

his standard coffee and toast, then waits for "Big John", the Mercedes-driving taxi man who is his regular driver. "Maybe I'll buy a car for the trial," he says. "I spend so much on taxi fares in this country."

First, they drive to the office of the lawyer, Salim Dhanji, where Mr Ward works together with police detectives and the prosecution team on bundles of documents. Together they discuss the case and prosecution tactics. Mr Ward says this is a good "refresher" for him as a witness - "I will be the major story-teller in this case, because others go in and out, look at parts of it, but I am the thread that runs through from beginning to end."

TRUE TO form, the judge arrives in the tiny packed courtroom well after 9.30 - then there is a flurry of activity from photographers and television cameras around the accused,

Simon Makallah, and around John Ward. Sometimes the latter finds the media attention a bit much, although he is meticulously polite and facilitating. Of the scramble in the courtroom, he says it is like "throwing bread in a pond of fish".

When he sits in court, his demeanour changes. A large man, shrewd and decisive, normally with an appealing friendliness and bluff sense of humour, he seems to shrink in the pew-like seats. Dressed formally in a black suit and carrying a briefcase, he no longer looks like a working member of the team, but, with a strangely distant, strained appearance, a grieving father. The case is adjourned until 26 February, to give the court time to join the cases of the two men now accused of the murder.

MR WARD is dropped back at the apartment he has rented for the trial. He calls it shabby - "I don't like it" - but he did not have much choice in getting a short-let, furnished apartment in down-town Nairobi.

Two detectives are due shortly, so he makes tea and sandwiches and gets cold soft drinks out of the fridge. He says he likes the police team, and the lawyer, and considers many of them real friends.

As a multi-millionaire hotelier, he is as at home entertaining in his own kitchen as he is being served like a celebrity. When the detectives leave Mr Ward's "office" at around 5.30pm - documents spread on the coffee table where the lap-



Julie's father, John Ward, in the courtroom in Nairobi on Thursday

Reuters

top is a token concession to technology - he "clears up the bloody dishes" and says he wonders sometimes what his life has come to.

ON FRIDAY morning, Mr Ward has an uncharacteristically late breakfast. "I tossed and turned until about four in the morning," he says. The trial was on his mind, and a meeting he has next week with

his shareholders in London.

He shows no desire to talk about seeing the accused. But then he sharply interrupts to say Makallah's attitude has changed in court. "I think he knows this is it," he says.

He has another day of legal work ahead of him, but hopes "we" will be able to have a day off at lake-side Naivasha on Sunday. It turns out to be a solitary plan. "I tend to say we even when I mean me," he says.

Mr Ward still hopes his wife, Jan, will join him during the trial, but is not sure. "She's working on other things, like exhibitions of Muff's [the family nickname for Julie] wildlife photos in London," he says.

Much as he wants her to come, he is pragmatic about his wife's involvement elsewhere. It's "a good thing", he says, she has found something else in life, other than the trial.

LUCY HANNAN

Child rapist is executed in B-movie style

THE GRUESOME circus surrounding the execution of the Filipino child rapist Leo Echegaray finally ended yesterday at exactly 3.19pm Manila time when he was pronounced dead after an injection of a lethal dose of potassium chloride.

The 38-year-old house painter became the first man to be executed in the Philippines for 23 years after narrowly escaping death last month when he was granted a reprieve by the Supreme Court, allowing Congress to reconsider its stance on the death penalty.

Congress, urged on by President Joseph Estrada and the rape victim, Echegaray's daughter-in-law, known as "Baby", turned its back on pleas to keep the Philippines free of the death penalty.

Only the President could have saved Echegaray but he came to office last May pledging to fight crime. He sees executions as a key tool in the battle. The crime rate remains high but President Estrada is pursuing a popular campaign to get tough on criminals.

He said on Thursday that he had no time to read Echegaray's last-minute appeal and yesterday declared that the hotline to the presidential palace, which can be used for appeals, was cut because he had no intention of listening to a reprieve request.

When the condemned house painter entered the execution chamber he was wearing a wrist band with the name "Erap" written on it. Erap is the President's nickname; Echegaray, like many other poor people, was one of his supporters. He also clutched a Bible and wore a badge reading "execute justice, not people". According to Zensaida Javier, the woman he married while in jail, he maintained his innocence to the last.

However, his lawyer, Theodore Tay, was more circumspect. "I believe he is

BY STEPHEN VINES
in Manila

sincere," he said, "and that he believes he is innocent."

Echegaray was accused of raping the then 10-year-old girl five times.

According to a prison official his last words were: "Baby, forgive me."

If this sounds like a truck from a corny Hollywood film script it may be because the whole execution was surrounded in the morbid atmosphere of a B-movie plot.

Film-makers in the Philippines are busy putting together the story in a typically lurid fashion. On the eve of the execution, a local radio station aired a cassette recorded by his wife on her final visit, in which Echegaray spoke of his love for her and his dreams of their future life together.

Inside the prison, reporters were admitted to see the condemned man make his half-mile shuffle from his cell to the execution room.

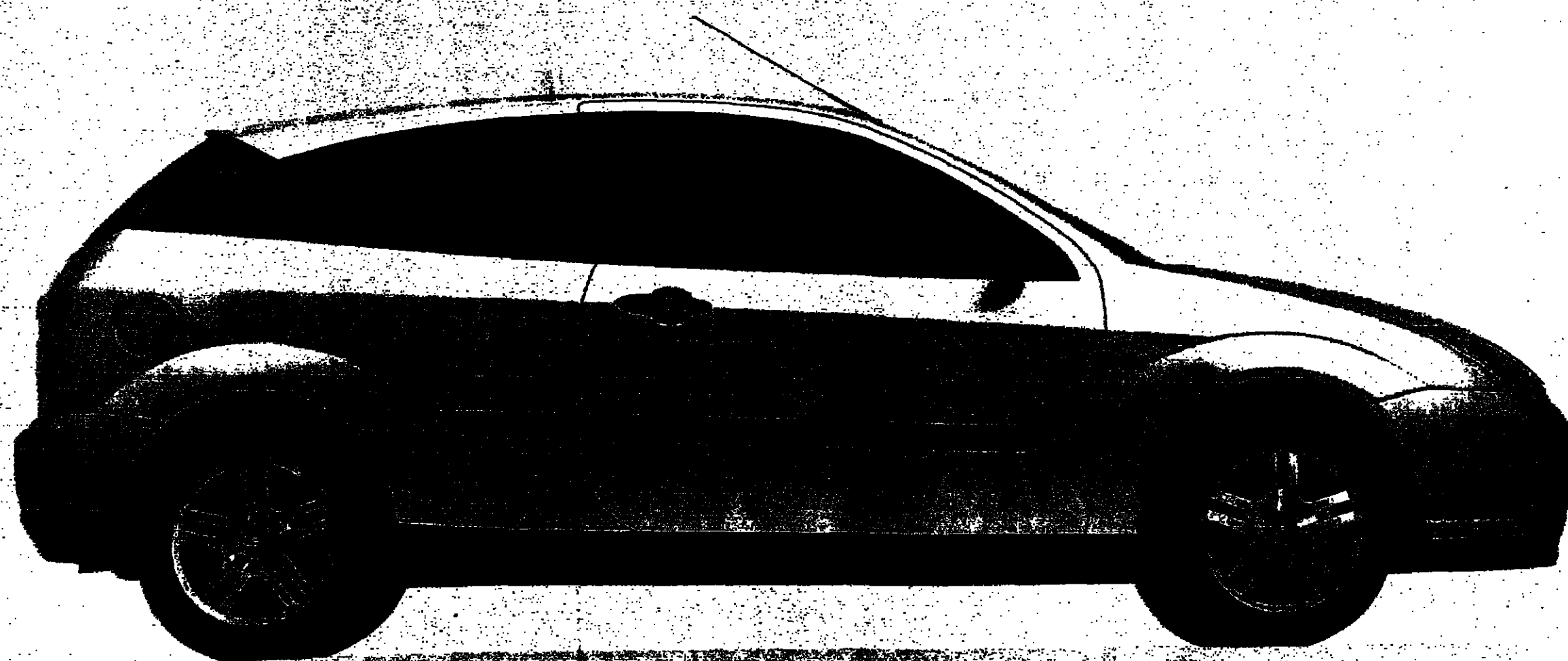
Outside the jail where the execution took place, rival prayer vigils and demonstrations were held by pro- and anti-death penalty activists.

Echegaray's wife went up to the prison fence to have her picture taken with a pink rose in her hand. Around the nation church bells were rung at 3pm by order of the Catholic church, which has led the anti-death penalty crusade.

"This is a sad day," said Oscar Cruz, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. "Life is taken away - not by accident, not by sickness, not even by a criminal, but by no less than the state."

A rather different view came from the presidential palace, where the President's men were busy churning out statements about how their leader had stood firm and was waiting for the other 914 inmates on death row to be dealt with.

the year
out why
as
expect to be
space
ations
16v zetec
FR on Options



the new ford focus



first purchase payment, retail customers only. typical example: monthly payments £171.25, mileage pa 12,000, deposit £4,550, balance £8,450, total credit charges £1,634 (including finance facility fee of £70 payable with first monthly payment, further charges may be levied) excluding motor tax - £250, the seven organising publications of the "Car Of The Year 1999" award are vi blagere, am, autocar, l'automobile magazine, autopista, stern, autovisie.

Business & City Editor, Jeremy Warner
News desk: 0171-293 2636 Fax: 0171-293 2098
E-mail: IndyBusiness@Independent.co.uk

BUSINESS

19

BRIEFING

Hamley's shareholders play tough

INSTITUTIONAL shareholder pressure is understood to be mounting for changes on the board of Hamley's, the underperforming toy retailer. Leading investors are said to be unhappy about declining profits at the group and may push for a new chief executive to replace Chris Ash. His position appears to have been undermined by the return of Stephen Woodbridge as executive deputy chairman, although he is supposedly only working on short-term projects. Hamley's profits are forecast to fall from last year's £7.5m to £5m this year after a series of operational problems that have compounded the impact of weak consumer spending and falling tourist numbers at its flagship Regent Street store. Hamley's biggest shareholders are M&G, Jupiter and Phillips & Drew.

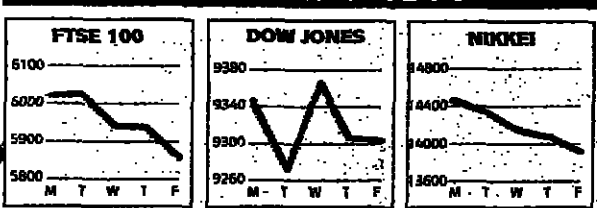
Dimon seeks \$42.5m share sale

JAMIE DIMON (left), the former president of Citigroup, yesterday applied to sell 800,000 shares, worth about \$42.5m (£26m), in the company he abruptly left in November. Mr Dimon, 42, stunned Wall Street when he left the world's largest financial company at the request of his boss and former mentor, the co-chairman Sanford Weill. Mr Dimon's departure, a month after Citigroup's merger with Travelers Group, followed a \$1.33bn trading loss at the investment banking unit he led with Deryck Maughan.

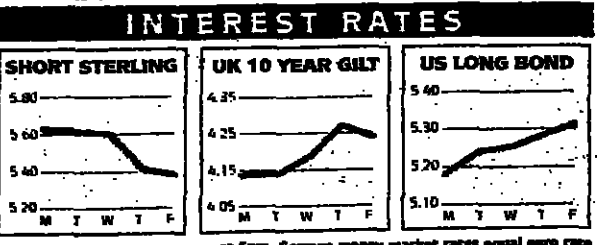
Weir rejects £600m cash offer

WEIR GROUP, the Glasgow-based pump maker, yesterday rejected a £600m cash offer from Flowserve of the US, whose offer was worth 300p per Weir share. Flowserve is smaller than Weir and could not afford the extra debt to mount a realistic offer. Weir, profitable and cash-rich, is expected to resist any offer under 350p. The shares fell 26p to 381p.

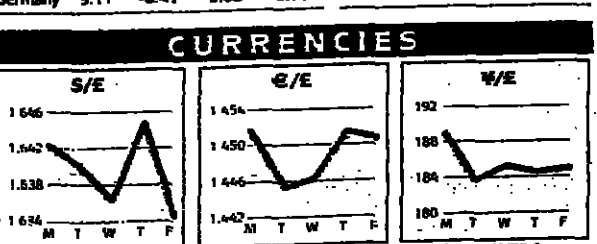
STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol (%)
FTSE 100	5833.30	-84.60	-1.42	6195.60	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	5211.50	-21.10	-0.40	5970.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2782.20	-35.70	-1.26	2969.10	2210.40	2.83
FTSE All Share	2700.41	-32.41	-1.19	2886.52	2143.53	2.87
FTSE SmallCap	2209.90	8.50	0.39	2793.80	1834.40	3.69
FTSE Fledgling	1213.40	2.80	0.23	1517.10	1046.20	3.46
FTSE AIM	832.20	-4.10	-0.50	1146.50	781.90	1.26
FTSE Europe 100	2757.40	-13.41	-0.48	3079.27	2013.15	2.18
FTSE Europe 300	1204.42	-6.23	-0.52	1332.07	880.63	2.01
Dow Jones	9302.18	-1.29	-0.01	9547.86	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	12888.09	-188.77	-1.44	17322.35	12787.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9190.20	-248.45	-2.63	11926.16	6544.79	3.83
Dax	5080.77	2.92	0.06	6217.83	3833.71	1.69
S&P 500	1237.37	-11.18	-0.90	1285.54	925.32	1.28
Nasdaq	2446.47	-32.59	-1.33	2933.44	1897.09	0.28
Sensex 300	6620.90	-1.50	-0.04	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	8370.83	-381.21	-4.53	12339.14	4575.69	7.63
Belgium BEL20	3474.56	15.84	0.46	3713.21	2399.41	2.04
Amsterdam AEX	534.36	3.09	0.58	600.65	365.58	1.84
France CAC 40	4147.30	-20.12	-0.48	4404.94	2881.21	1.95
Milan MIB30	3394.00	-77.00	-2.23	39170.00	24175.00	1.20
Madrid IBEX 35	3909.30	-46.10	-1.17	4098.60	3069.90	1.53
Irish OSE	3215.48	-72.24	-2.25	3581.70	2732.57	1.53
S Korea Comp	551.39	1.24	0.23	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2911.90	-26.60	-0.92	2948.70	2386.70	3.15



Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol (%)
FTSE 100	5833.30	-84.60	-1.42	6195.60	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	5211.50	-21.10	-0.40	5970.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2782.20	-35.70	-1.26	2969.10	2210.40	2.83
FTSE All Share	2700.41	-32.41	-1.19	2886.52	2143.53	2.87
FTSE SmallCap	2209.90	8.50	0.39	2793.80	1834.40	3.69
FTSE Fledgling	1213.40	2.80	0.23	1517.10	1046.20	3.46
FTSE AIM	832.20	-4.10	-0.50	1146.50	781.90	1.26
FTSE Europe 100	2757.40	-13.41	-0.48	3079.27	2013.15	2.18
FTSE Europe 300	1204.42	-6.23	-0.52	1332.07	880.63	2.01
Dow Jones	9302.18	-1.29	-0.01	9547.86	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	12888.09	-188.77	-1.44	17322.35	12787.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9190.20	-248.45	-2.63	11926.16	6544.79	3.83
Dax	5080.77	2.92	0.06	6217.83	3833.71	1.69
S&P 500	1237.37	-11.18	-0.90	1285.54	925.32	1.28
Nasdaq	2446.47	-32.59	-1.33	2933.44	1897.09	0.28
Sensex 300	6620.90	-1.50	-0.04	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	8370.83	-381.21	-4.53	12339.14	4575.69	7.63
Belgium BEL20	3474.56	15.84	0.46	3713.21	2399.41	2.04
Amsterdam AEX	534.36	3.09	0.58	600.65	365.58	1.84
France CAC 40	4147.30	-20.12	-0.48	4404.94	2881.21	1.95
Milan MIB30	3394.00	-77.00	-2.23	39170.00	24175.00	1.20
Madrid IBEX 35	3909.30	-46.10	-1.17	4098.60	3069.90	1.53
Irish OSE	3215.48	-72.24	-2.25	3581.70	2732.57	1.53
S Korea Comp	551.39	1.24	0.23	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2911.90	-26.60	-0.92	2948.70	2386.70	3.15



Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol (%)
FTSE 100	5833.30	-84.60	-1.42	6195.60	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	5211.50	-21.10	-0.40	5970.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2782.20	-35.70	-1.26	2969.10	2210.40	2.83
FTSE All Share	2700.41	-32.41	-1.19	2886.52	2143.53	2.87
FTSE SmallCap	2209.90	8.50	0.39	2793.80	1834.40	3.69
FTSE Fledgling	1213.40	2.80	0.23	1517.10	1046.20	3.46
FTSE AIM	832.20	-4.10	-0.50	1146.50	781.90	1.26
FTSE Europe 100	2757.40	-13.41	-0.48	3079.27	2013.15	2.18
FTSE Europe 300	1204.42	-6.23	-0.52	1332.07	880.63	2.01
Dow Jones	9302.18	-1.29	-0.01	9547.86	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	12888.09	-188.77	-1.44	17322.35	12787.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9190.20	-248.45	-2.63	11926.16	6544.79	3.83
Dax	5080.77	2.92	0.06	6217.83	3833.71	1.69
S&P 500	1237.37	-11.18	-0.90	1285.54	925.32	1.28
Nasdaq	2446.47	-32.59	-1.33	2933.44	1897.09	0.28
Sensex 300	6620.90	-1.50	-0.04	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	8370.83	-381.21	-4.53	12339.14	4575.69	7.63
Belgium BEL20	3474.56	15.84	0.46	3713.21	2399.41	2.04
Amsterdam AEX	534.36	3.09	0.58	600.65	365.58	1.84
France CAC 40	4147.30	-20.12	-0.48	4404.94	2881.21	1.95
Milan MIB30	3394.00	-77.00	-2.23	39170.00	24175.00	1.20
Madrid IBEX 35	3909.30	-46.10	-1.17	4098.60	3069.90	1.53
Irish OSE	3215.48	-72.24	-2.25	3581.70	2732.57	1.53
S Korea Comp	551.39	1.24	0.23	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2911.90	-26.60	-0.92	2948.70	2386.70	3.15

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol (%)
FTSE 100	5833.30	-84.60	-1.42	6195.60	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	5211.50	-21.10	-0.40	5970.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2782.20	-35.70	-1.26	2969.10	2210.40	2.83
FTSE All Share	2700.41	-32.41	-1.19	2886.52	2143.53	2.87
FTSE SmallCap	2209.90	8.50	0.39	2793.80	1834.40	3.69
FTSE Fledgling	1213.40	2.80	0.23	1517.10	1046.20	3.46
FTSE AIM	832.20	-4.10	-0.50	1146.50	781.90	1.26
FTSE Europe 100	2757.40	-13.41	-0.48	3079.27	2013.15	2.18
FTSE Europe 300	1204.42	-6.23	-0.52	1332.07	880.63	2.01
Dow Jones	9302.18	-1.29	-0.01	9547.86	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	12888.09	-188.77	-1.44	17322.35	12787.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9190.20	-248.45	-2.63	11926.16	6544.79	3.83
Dax	5080.77	2.92	0.06	6217.83	3833.71	1.69
S&P 500	1237.37	-11.18	-0.90	1285.54	925.32	1.28
Nasdaq	2446.47	-32.59	-1.33	2933.44	1897.09	0.28
Sensex 300	6620.90	-1.50	-0.04	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	8370.83	-381.21	-4.53	12339.14	4575.69	7.63
Belgium BEL20	3474.56	15.84	0.46	3713.21	2399.41	2.04
Amsterdam AEX	534.36	3.09	0.58	600.65	365.58	1.84
France CAC 40	4147.30	-20.12	-0.48	4404.94	2881.21	1.95
Milan MIB30	3394.00	-77.00	-2.23	39170.00	24175.00	1.20
Madrid IBEX 35	3909.30	-46.10	-1.17	4098.60	3069.90	1.53
Irish OSE	3215.48	-72.24	-2.25	3581.70	2732.57	1.53
S Korea Comp	551.39	1.24	0.23	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2911.90	-26.60	-0.92	2948.70	2386.70	3.15

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol (%)
FTSE 100	5833.30	-84.60	-1.42	6195.60	4599.20	2.76
FTSE 250	5211.50	-21.10	-0.40	5970.90	4247.60	3.20
FTSE 350	2782.20	-35.70	-1.26	2969.10	2210.40	2.83
FTSE All Share	2700.41	-32.41	-1.19	2886.52	2143.53	2.87
FTSE SmallCap	2209.90	8.50	0.39	2793.80	1834.40	3.69
FTSE Fledgling	1213.40	2.80	0.23	1517.10	1046.20	3.46
FTSE AIM	832.20	-4.10	-0.50	1146.50	781.90	1.26
FTSE Europe 100	2757.40	-13.41	-0.48	3079.27	2013.15	2.18
FTSE Europe 300	1204.42	-6.23	-0.52	1332.07	880.63	2.01
Dow Jones	9302.18	-1.29	-0.01	9547.86	7400.30	1.64
Nikkei	12888.09	-188.77	-1.44	17322.35	12787.90	1.05
Hang Seng	9190.20	-248.45	-2.63	11926.16	6544.79	3.83
Dax	5080.77	2.92	0.06	6217.83	3833.71	1.69
S&P 500	1237.37	-11.18	-0.90	1285.54	925.32	1.28
Nasdaq	2446.47	-32.59	-1.33	2933.44	1897.09	0.28
Sensex 300	6620.90	-1.50	-0.04	7837.70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	8370.83	-381.21	-4.53	12339.14	4575.69	7.63
Belgium BEL20	3474.56	15.84	0.46	3713.21	2399.41	2.04
Amsterdam AEX	534.36	3.09	0.58	600.65	365.58	1.84
France CAC 40	4147.30	-20.12	-0.48	4404.94	2881.21	1.95
Milan MIB30	3394.00	-77.00	-2.23	39170.00	24175.00	1.20
Madrid IBEX 35	3909.30	-46.10	-1.17	4098.60	3069.90	1.53
Irish OSE	3215.48	-72.24	-2.25	3581.70	2732.57	1.53
S Korea Comp	551.39	1.24	0.23	651.95	277.37	0.06
Australia ASX	2911.90	-26.60	-0.92	2948.70	2386.70	3.15

Austria (schillings)	19.30	Netherlands (guilder)	2.8557
Belgium (francs)	56.76	New Zealand (\$)	12.25
Canada (\$)	2.3669	Norway (kroner)	280.35
Greece (drachmas)	0.8128	Portugal (escudos)	5.9848
Japan (yen)	10.51	Saudi Arabia (rials)	

STOCKS													
Low	High	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E	Div	Yield	Low	High				
132	Capitol	172 1/2	+5 1/2	111	17 1/2	7.16		875	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
133	Cardinal	246 1/2	+10 1/4	114	25 1/2	27.78		915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
134	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
135	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
136	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
137	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
138	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
139	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
140	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
141	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
142	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
143	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
144	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
145	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
146	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
147	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
148	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
149	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
150	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
151	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
152	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
153	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
154	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
155	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
156	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
157	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
158	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
159	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
160	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
161	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
162	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
163	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
164	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
165	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
166	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
167	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
168	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
169	Call												

STOCKS													
Low	High	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E	Div	Yield	Low	High				
132	Capitol	172 1/2	+5 1/2	111	17 1/2	7.16		875	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
133	Cardinal	246 1/2	+10 1/4	114	25 1/2	27.78		915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
134	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
135	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
136	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
137	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
138	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
139	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
140	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
141	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
142	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
143	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
144	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
145	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
146	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
147	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
148	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
149	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
150	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
151	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
152	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
153	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
154	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
155	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
156	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
157	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
158	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
159	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
160	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
161	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
162	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
163	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
164	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
165	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
166	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
167	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
168	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
169	Call												

STOCKS													
Low	High	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E	Div	Yield	Low	High				
132	Capitol	172 1/2	+5 1/2	111	17 1/2	7.16		875	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
133	Cardinal	246 1/2	+10 1/4	114	25 1/2	27.78		915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
134	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
135	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
136	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
137	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
138	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
139	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
140	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
141	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
142	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
143	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
144	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
145	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
146	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
147	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
148	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
149	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
150	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
151	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
152	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
153	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
154	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
155	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
156	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
157	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
158	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
159	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
160	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
161	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
162	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
163	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
164	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
165	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
166	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
167	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
168	Callahan	22	-2	22				915	Clared Inc	112 1/2	+5 1/2	72	1232
169	Call												

STOCKS									
Low	High	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E	Div	Yield	Low	High
132	Capitol	172 1/2	+5 1/2	111	17 1/2	7.1			

[illegible]

Net gain may be only for consumers

MASAYOSHI SON is a South Korean who lives in Japan. Some years ago, he decided that the Internet would be the future and raised \$100m to invest in the World Wide Web. His company, Softbank Corporation of Japan, examined some 5,000 Internet companies, most of them from the US, and eventually invested in 100 of them. His choices, which include a big stake in Yahoo!, have made him seem like one of the most inspired investors of all time.



JEREMY WARNER

There is no doubt that the Internet is raising some fascinating investment issues

Today his \$100m is worth in excess of \$15bn and he is at the vanguard of the boom in Internet stocks. Most people think the phenomenon a bubble, which will inevitably burst and deflate. Mr Son believes we are only at the beginning - that the market capitalisation of the Internet sector will continue to rise exponentially over the years ahead as the World Wide Web works its transforming powers on business.

Whose judgement would you rather trust? Those who have utterly failed to forecast the significance of the Net, and now without a single Internet stock in their portfolio, condemn the phenomenon as a dangerous financial bubble, or those who like Mr Son saw it coming and backed their hunches? I'm

not even going to attempt to answer this question, because whichever way I jump, I'm highly likely to be wrong. But there is no doubt that the Internet is raising some fascinating investment issues.

Just consider the following. An Internet company called Buy.com in the US is planning shortly to tap the market for \$60m through an initial public offering. The issue is almost bound to be hugely oversubscribed, for Buy.com has a unique selling

proposition. Its business plan envisages a negative margin on everything it sells over the Net - in other words it plans to sell products for less than it buys them for. The difference, it is envisaged, will be made up by advertising revenue. The more hits that Buy.com can generate, the more advertising it will attract and the more it can reduce its prices.

This is such a far out business proposition that it could only really be invented in America.

There is nothing new in the concept of loss leading, of course. The story is possibly apocryphal, but it was reported at the time of the great baked beans price war some years ago that one supermarket actually began to pay shoppers to come through the doors and relieve its shelves of baked beans. A similar form of loss leading is being used by the supermarkets in the present bread price war. On our own turf in the British newspaper industry, The Times has been selling below its costs of production for five years now, and jolly annoying it is too.

In all these cases, however, such loss leading, predatory pricing, call it what you will, is only possible because it is conducted by large organisations able to cross subsidise

from more conventionally priced products. Buy.com is a business start up and no such subsidy is available. Even so, it might just work. Independent Television in Britain has operated profitably in precisely this manner for many years, paying for the cost of its programmes entirely from advertising revenues.

But just think about the implications of what Buy.com is proposing. It sells products at below cost, which in turn puts a general deflationary pressure on product prices. It hopes to make up the money by persuading the producers of those products to advertise. For conventional producers and distributors, this is plainly extremely bad news indeed. At every level, they lose out.

In such a game, even Internet distributors such as Amazon.com would struggle, because eventually Buy.com and others like it will find a way of selling books and CDs even more cheaply. Far from benefiting business, then, the Internet may be destined profoundly to damage it. Certainly it is capable of tipping the scales of benefit very significantly away from business and towards the consumer. Logically we'll end up with a situation where the intensity of competition on the Net

will mean nobody is capable of making a profit.

In reality, of course, that extreme of position will never be reached, if only because business has to make profit to survive. All the same, the idea that the World Wide Web presents businesses old and new with unparalleled opportunities may be a bit of a misconception.

Certainly there will be business success stories on the web. It can also safely be said that those businesses that don't fully embrace the net will fail. Furthermore, the web has the potential greatly to increase the volume and speed of trade. But in the end the web is more of a challenge to business than an opportunity.

This applies not just to established producer/distributors, but to the newer generation of wealth creators and Internet entrepreneurs too. Electronic commerce has already achieved take off point in the US. In the process, quite a few traditional "on-line" retailers have now largely made the switch to "on-line".

For instance, at Charles Schwab, the discount stock broker, more than 70 per cent of trades are now conducted through the Net. Remarkably, this migration has al-

lowed Schwab greatly to enhance customer service. It is now able to offer personal advice and content in a way never economically possible under the old model.

In Britain, the migration to electronic commerce is likely to be slower. This is not just because personal computer penetration is lower: The telephone costs of using the Net - free in the US, costly in the UK - are proving a big constraint on growth too. Even so, what is happening in the US will presumably eventually sweep the world.

Some forecasters believe that e-commerce will quite quickly grow to be larger than the total size of all commerce as it stands today. If this seems a logical impossibility, it is only because the Net's potential for expanding the volume and speed of trade tends to be ignored. However, even the most conservative forecasts point to phenomenal growth.

Despite this, it is not yet clear where the web's money making capacity lies, if indeed it lies anywhere. For most businesses, the web is just another marketing and distribution channel, albeit a very low cost one. Nobody has any doubt but that the web is going to transform the way they do business, but they

also worry about how they are ever going to make any money out of it. It may well be that the only true business beneficiaries are the Internet wholesalers and gate keepers, those able to offer a mechanism for searching the Web for the lowest possible prices.

Nobody can reasonably object to competition and transparency; but many businessmen are beginning to think there are limits. Unfortunately the Internet doesn't recognise them. Personally, I share the investment perspective of the Web put forward by Bill Gates of Microsoft.

I hope I do him no injustice by paraphrasing it in this manner: The net is plainly a wonderful thing which is revolutionising the way business is conducted, and for consumers it is a godsend which for the first time this millennium puts them firmly in the saddle in terms of choice and value. But don't assume there's gold to be had from mining these seams. Disney and Coca Cola are much more likely still to be big companies making good profits 25 years from now than Yahoo! or Amazon.com. And as for established consumer goods producers, the outlook is only for more and more competition and keener and keener pricing.

Holiday sector in demand as Footsie feels the pressure

AS BOOKIE William Hill canters along towards its market flotation, shares of the last big "popular" stock sale came to life as takeover rumours swirled around.

Thomson Travel, Britain's biggest holidays group, has been a major disappointment to its army of small shareholders. The shares briefly flirted with 200p but were down to 105.5 in October and humping along at 138p before they were engulfed in bid excitement. Talk of a German bid lifted them 17.5p to 155.5 - still below the offer price - in frenetic trading.

The Thomson float, accompanied by the perk of cut-price holidays for subscribing shareholders, was marred by complaints of share shop inefficiency.

This week the other leading holiday operators have also been in demand although, until yesterday's burst of activity, Thomson had been left out in the cold.

The holiday sector has been encouraged by favourable comments from Warburg Dillon Read, which has alighted on Thomson and Airtours as its favoured shares.

It could be argued that the sudden strength of holiday shares is related to the modest revival in oversold leisure shares this week. Forward holiday bookings are thought to be running at a heady level.

EXPECT takeover action soon from AIM-listed Pubs'n'Bars. The group is thought to be near to taking over a 34-strong pubs chain with which it is already closely related. Talks are also going on with another pubs company and there are hopes they will be concluded in the next few weeks.

Pubs'n'Bars, with its shares unchanged at 50p, is capitalised at £1.8m.

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

£28.5m. Until the share sale it was controlled by the Canadian Thomson family. Now the Canadian interest is down to 20 per cent.

Most other shares were down in the dumps. Footsie, ruffled by fears of higher US interest rates, fell 84.6 points to 5,855.3 in another busy session. Even the in-form mid cap index, strong for much of this year, lost its enthusiasm, falling 21.1 points to 5,211.5. It was left to the small cap shares to keep the bull flag flying, with their index up 8.5 to 2,209.9.

J Sainsbury's disappointing trading statement - and, presumably, the bread war - lowered the shares by 36p to 383p, a 12-month low. Tesco lost 5.75p to 181.75p and Sainsbury

Shares in Bage Software were again buffeted as stories went round that Microsoft may take a 5 per cent stake in the computer games group.

The company recently said it was in talks with Microsoft on distribution of its latest football game, Round Gullit Striker. Rags shares fell 0.5p to 14.75p. Seaq put turnover at 5.4 million. Three years ago the price touched 25p.

Results would be below expectations.

Gyrus, a medical group, firmed 2p to 175.5p; it raised £10.5m by placing shares at 145p. Future Integrated Technology, unchanged at 25p, raised £115,000, placing shares at 21p. Oxford Molecular hardened 2.5p to 39p as a long time seller was cleared.

Dawson International, gained 5p to 17p - five years ago the shares were 150p - as aggressive investor Guinness Peat arrived with a 5.4 per cent shareholding. Phillips & Drew, the fund manager that has been flexing its investment muscles lately, is already involved in the textile group with a 21.7 per cent stake.

Fitness First, the health club chain planning to move from AIM to a full listing next week, jumped 26p to 388.5p.

SEAG VOLUME: 1.08 billion
SEAG TRADES: 75,759
GILTS INDEX: 115.86 +0.08

There was mixed news on the takeover front. Weir, the engineer, collapsed 26p to 281p as it ended discussions with

Flowserve, a US group. The Americans, it seems, were prepared to bid 300p a share; whether they will return to the fray with a hostile offer remains to be seen.

Watts, Blake Bearne, the china clays group, firmed 15p to 490p after its major shareholder, the Belgian Sibelco group, produced its signalled offer. Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers firmed 25p to 1,725p after Newsquest, unchanged at 301p, indicated bid hopes.

Rebus, the computer group, jumped 22p to 159.5p as offer talks were confirmed.

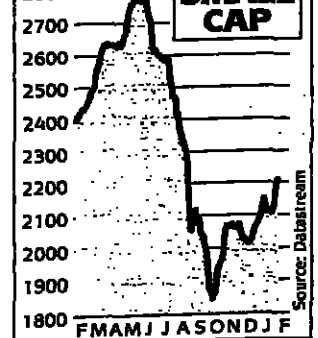
Wyko, a precision engineer, said it had not collected any offers but was reviewing its options. The shares gained 13p to 94p.

BICC, the cables and construction group, remained on the wanted list, gaining 1.5p to 84p on continuing bid speculation. But engineer FKI, widely tipped as the next bid target, fell 5.5p to 163.5p in busy trading.

Northern Leisure, the discotheque chain, added 10.5p to 148p as the group continued to benefit from bid talk and the revival in the heavily battered leisure sector.

Profits warnings flowed again. Salt group Stavely fell 9.5p to 71.5p and MDIS, no stranger to providing dire tidings to shareholders, lost 3.5p to 42p after cautioning that re-

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



12p.5p to 278.5p. Associated British Foods, the Sunbelt bread group, crumbled 28p to 520p.

Footsie's top player was BGC, up 19p to 360.5p EMI, the showbiz group, continued to score from Warburg Dillon Read support, up a further 18.5p to 450.5p.

WPP, the advertising group, gained 12p to 474p on Goldman Sachs support, and NFC advanced 6p to 147.5p after meeting analysts.

Tate & Lyle, the sweeteners group, improved 20.25p to 450p as BT Alex Brown suggested a 500p target.

Ladbroke, confirming it is the Stakis stalker, fell 8.75p to 230p; Stakis rose 4.5p to 141.5p. Vaux, the hotel and pub group that is near to selling its two breweries and 350 bottom-of-the-barrel pubs, put on 20.5p to 275p on the theory that it, too, will be drawn into the maelstrom of corporate action in the hotels sector.

There was mixed news on the takeover front. Weir, the engineer, collapsed 26p to 281p as it ended discussions with



Stephen Grabiner, ONdigital's chief executive: The pay-TV venture could be worth up to £1bn on flotation

Granada seeks early float to fix market value of ONdigital

GRANADA, the media to hotels group, is pushing for an early flotation of ONdigital in an attempt to put a firm valuation on the fledgling pay-television venture.

Granada is understood to want to examine the possibility of floating ONdigital in 18 months' time. The company is likely to push for the issue to be discussed by ONdigital's board before the end of the year.

Floating ONdigital would help cement the value of the venture, 50 per cent owned by Granada and Carlton, the media group run by Michael Green. City analysts are divided about ONdigital's value, with estimates of its worth ranging

from £250m to as much as £1bn.

ONdigital, which launched its 30-channel service in November, has been battling with British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television group, in the race to sign up subscribers to digital television.

Details of ONdigital's performance are a close secret, but its shareholders expect it to have signed up 350,000 subscribers by the end of the year. BSkyB will next week update the City on the performance of its digital service when it issues half-year results. However, ONdigital is thought unlikely to issue an update before May.

Charles Allen, Granada's chief executive, is understood to be interested in floating the minimum 20 per cent stake allowed by Stock Exchange rules. Shareholders may also want to capitalise on the soaring valuations attached to hi-tech stocks by seeking a dual listing on Nasdaq, the US exchange.

Carlton and Granada have budgeted a total investment of £375m for ONdigital over the next five years. The venture will break even when it has two million subscribers.

The flotation of ONdigital has been under consideration for some time. Last year Morgan Stanley, the investment bank, was retained to examine

the possibility of a float. However, ONdigital is not currently thought to have retained any financial advisors.

If Carlton and Granada decide against an early float, they are likely to wait until 2003 when the business has been up and running for five years.

Meanwhile, Granada yesterday indicated that TTV had increased its share of television advertising revenue since the beginning of the year. Steve Morrison, chief executive of Granada's media division, said TTV's advertising revenues in January grew by 11 per cent on the same month last year. In 1998 TTV's advertising revenues grew by a total of 4.8 per cent.

Newsquest confirms P&S takeover talks

NEWSQUEST, publisher of the Northern Echo and Oxford Mail, yesterday confirmed it is in preliminary takeover talks with Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers, which put itself up for sale last month after rejecting a bid approach from rival Johnston Press.

Newsquest last night issued a statement confirming its intent after the competition minister, Kim Howells, decided to refer Johnston's proposed acquisition of P&S to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Following that decision, Newsquest has asked the Department of Trade and Industry for a similar reference that would allow a Newsquest bid for the group to be considered at the same time.

P&S shares rose 25p to 1,725p yesterday, valuing the company at over £200m. Sources close to Newsquest

insisted last night that the request should not be read to mean the group would definitely make an offer for P&S.

"This is a matter of keeping our options open in the event of our making a bid," said a source.

There is little doubt that Newsquest has the firepower to pull the deal off. Although the group is heavily geared, analysts said it had a strong cash flow and an unused bank facility of £150m at its disposal.

Johnston said earlier this week that it would press on with its bid for P&S despite the failure of its tender offer for 10 per cent of the group. Johnston already holds 14.99 per cent.

Charles Villiers, who built up the local newspaper interests of Scottish Radio Holdings, has confirmed he is putting together a bid for the entire group.

P&S said: "We welcome any interest. We do not have anything such as a favoured bidder. There are certainly others out there."

week that it would press on with its bid for P&S despite the failure of its tender offer for 10 per cent of the group. Johnston already holds 14.99 per cent.

Charles Villiers, who built up the local newspaper interests of Scottish Radio Holdings, has confirmed he is putting together a bid for the entire group.

P&S said: "We welcome any interest. We do not have anything such as a favoured bidder. There are certainly others out there."

Johnston said earlier this week that it would press on with its bid for P&S despite the failure of its tender offer for 10 per cent of the group. Johnston already holds 14.99 per cent.

Charles Villiers, who built up the local newspaper interests of Scottish Radio Holdings, has confirmed he is putting together a bid for the entire group.

week that it would press on with its bid for P&S despite the failure of its tender offer for 10 per cent of the group. Johnston already holds 14.99 per cent.

Charles Villiers, who built up the local newspaper interests of Scottish Radio Holdings, has confirmed he is putting together a bid for the entire group.

P&S said: "We welcome any interest. We do not have anything such as a favoured bidder. There are certainly others out there."

Johnston said earlier this week that it would press on with its bid for P&S despite the failure of its tender offer for 10 per cent of the group. Johnston already holds 14.99 per cent.

Charles Villiers, who built up the local newspaper interests of Scottish Radio Holdings, has confirmed he is putting together a bid for the entire group.

IN BRIEF

US jobless rate at 30-year low

THE NUMBER of jobs created in the US amounted to 245,000 last month, leaving the unemployment rate at a near-30 year low of 4.3 per cent. News of the bigger-than-expected increase in non-farm payrolls was tempered by a downward revision of 80,000 to December's rise. However, the figure confirmed the remarkable and continuing strength of the American economy.

WBB accepts bid

WATTS, BLAKE Bearne, the Devon-based china clay producer, accepted a bid of 500p a share from SCR Sibelco, a privately-owned Belgian glass, sand and minerals group which already owns 44 per cent of WBB. The bid price is 31 per cent above the market price of WBB before takeover talks were announced last month, and values the company at around 16 times forecast earnings for 1998.

£1m share sale

ROBIN SAXBY, president of ARM Holdings, yesterday sold 60,000 of his shares in the British microchip manufacturer for more than £1m. After unveiling full-year pre-tax profits on Wednesday of £9.4m, more than double the previous year's total, ARM's share price rose 182.5p, 8.6 per cent, to 2,045p.

Gordon to retire

DONALD GORDON, the South African financier, announced that he plans to retire from the chairmanship of Liberty Life, the insurance company he founded, before the end of the year. Mr Gordon, 68, is to stay on as chairman of Capital Shopping Centres, which owns Lakeside in Thurrock and the Tyneside Metro Centre, and his London listed property and financial services vehicle, Liberty International.

Morse joins Offer

A SENIOR investment banker has been appointed to head the review of electricity prices by energy regulator Callum McCarthy. Richard Morse, a senior executive at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, is to join Offer on a two-year secondment in March.

NatPower play

NATIONAL POWER announced plans to expand its overseas operations further by building a £170m gas-fired power station in south Australia.

company at £250m. The company is expected to acquire other software businesses in France and the Benelux region as well as smaller firms in the UK and Scandinavia.

ECsoft said it had not focused too strongly on Year 2000 compliance work, which it says currently accounts for about 10 per cent of its total sales. Group sales rose by 41 per cent to reach £62.2m.

E-commerce drives profits boom at ECsoft

THE GROWTH of electronic commerce and Internet use by business and industry has fuelled a profits bonanza at ECsoft, a fledgling computer consultancy group floated on the stock market only last year.

Full-year profits more than doubled to £2.1m and the workforce has mushroomed from 101 in 1997 to almost 800. The company said: "In the course of the year we experienced an

increasing trend towards electronic commerce, with Internet access becoming prerequisite for many customer projects."

The profit growth contrasts the experience of many "go-go" Net commerce stocks, such as Amazon.com, which are enjoying huge sales booms but have yet to earn a penny in profit.

ECsoft specialises in the provision of computer solutions to businesses. These include e-commerce solutions and Internet access.

Recent contracts have included an Internet banking system for a Scandinavian bank, and a new Internet booking system for a cruise liner which allows the operator to bypass travel agents. Clients include BT, Esso and Unilever.

Another productive area for the company has been the provision of data warehousing systems enabling retailers to analyse buying patterns of customers who have loyalty cards.

To help support its growth, ECsoft has recruited the e-commerce team from Digital, the computer group.

The bumper profits pushed ECsoft shares up by 52.5p to a new high of 2,192.5p, valuing the

company at £250m. The company is expected to acquire other software businesses in France and the Benelux region as well as smaller firms in the UK and Scandinavia.

ECsoft said it had not focused too strongly on Year 2000 compliance work, which it says currently accounts for about 10 per cent of its total sales. Group sales rose by 41 per cent to reach £62.2m.

SPORT

The Arsenal manager's raid on the illustrious Gallic football academy has been condemned in his native land

Wenger's coup leaves French looking for spies



RICHARD WILLIAMS

"WELCOME to the psychodrama!" With a smile and an outstretched hand, André Méréle strode across the foyer of France's Institut National de Football. "Let me introduce you to spy number one," he said. Outside, on a garden path overshadowed by a 10ft-high gold replica of the World Cup, two middle-aged men stood talking. One of them broke off to shake hands.

Méréle indicated the other man. "This is spy number two." There was wry laughter. "And you may call me spy number three."

André Méréle, Claude Dusseau and Joachim Francisco Filho, grouped together in the ornamental garden of a French chateau, with a mist clinging to the surrounding forest. In a setting fit for the three musketeers, here were the three spies. The villains of French football. Traitors to the cause. And spies, worst of all, for the perceptive English.

Two weeks ago, the news broke that Arsène Wenger had signed yet another French player for his Highbury squad. And this time the boy was barely old enough to lace his own boots. Still two months away from his 16th birthday, Jérémie Alladière had been signed to a reported seven-year contract worth about £1.2m.

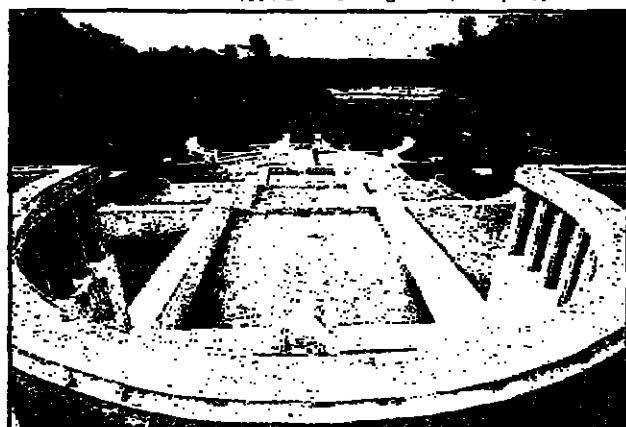
In France, the response was immediate and heated. "It's a disgrace," Noël Le Graët, the president of the French league, announced. "His coaches, his teachers and his parents should ask themselves a few questions about this auction of a child of 15."

Who is Jérémie Alladière? A centre-forward whose potential had been spotted at the age of seven and now, with five appearances in the national under-15 side to his name, a star of the junior teams of Racing Club de France. And from Monday to Friday a student at the INF, the institute in the grounds of the Château Montjoye at Clairefontaine, the former country home of a member of the Lazard banking family, where Dusseau, Filho and Méréle are the guardians of a project that has been described as the key to the technical policy of French football, a policy whose integrity had suddenly come under threat.

The French are very aware that their best players usually find fame and fortune outside their own frontiers. Of the 11 who started the World Cup final on the eve of Bastille Day, only two were playing for clubs in the French league. Fans and administrators alike are proud of the way French talent earns such practical recognition abroad, but are sensitive about the implications for the standing of the domestic game. And now the flower of French football had been plucked before it had even come into bud.

In outbidding the representatives of FC Rennes, who offered just over a million pounds,

Wenger had also seen off firm interest not just from several other French clubs, led by Paris St-Germain, but from Barcelona and Internazionale. "It's not just a financial decision," Laurent Alladière, the boy's father, told journalists. "We're not a poor family. If we chose Arsenal, it was because of what was offered on the sporting side. Certainly, football is a professional sport, and money is part of it. But we liked what Arsène Wenger had to say. 'London is only an hour from Paris by plane, two hours by train. If he'd joined Monaco, say, it would have been worse on that level. So it wasn't a gesture against the French clubs, it was just that Arsenal showed us the best opportunity. I don't know how they came to hear of him. But he's played in the



Clairefontaine, the impressive home of France's Institut National de Football

national under-15s. That's a good explanation, non?"

Not as far as the furious Le Graët was concerned. "Here is a boy, educated and coached within the national structures of French football, who leaves for the highest bidder," he raged. "What happened is obvious. Let's call a spade a spade. Arsène Wenger has an employee stalking the corridors of the Institute."

A week after Le Graët's outburst, a general council meeting of the French federation and the league agreed to form a commission of inquiry into the affair, in order to discover if employees of the institute at Clairefontaine had indeed acted as intermediaries between the player and the English club. "The FFF hunts

for spies" was *LEquipe's* headline. The finger of suspicion pointed firmly at Dusseau, the institute's director, and Filho and Méréle, his coaches.

Two days later Méréle sat in the institute's refectory, tucking into a *blanquette de veau*, mulling over *l'affaire Alladière*, and preparing his defence against the charges of espionage and treason.

"Football is small world," he said, "and today it's all about money. But we're not advisers in this respect. We're not agents. We're very cautious about that, because when a professional club here can't get a boy to sign with them, they tend to say, 'Ah well, the coaches at the institute advised him to go elsewhere.' The big clubs want the best young players, and when they don't get them, they become suspicious."

Alladière had played alongside his own son in a local team up to the age of 13. "Then we took him into the school here. At that point he could have registered for Paris St-Germain. They would have liked to sign him, and five of our other boys are with them. But the father knew that if he signed the registration card, that would be like a contract. He wanted his son to be able to make a decision later. So he signed for an amateur club, Racing de France. Then they

players go abroad, they learn, they grow in experience, and it's good for the national team."

Two of the Institute's recent graduates exemplify that phenomenon. Thierry Henry, the 20-year-old winger who starred in last summer's World Cup campaign before moving from Monaco to Juventus last month, is one graduate. Arsenal's 19-year-old Nicolas Anelka is another.

Sixty boys from the Paris region, aged between 13 and 16, are currently receiving instruction at Clairefontaine. A further 240 boys pass through six other centres around the country. All of them are weekly boarders, staying in a dormitory building in the chateau's grounds. From Monday to Friday they go by coach to local schools and then train from four o'clock to six o'clock. On Friday nights their parents arrive to take them home. On Sundays the boys play for the junior sides of their clubs before returning to the institute in the evening.

"Last year we had applications from 450 boys," Méréle said. "We picked 24. Each year two or three are eliminated, and we end up with a final year of 18 boys. We try to take the most skilful players. There's no question of size or strength. It's just the skills. And speed. We try to take speedy boys."

"What we notice is that the skilful players also have the best understanding of the game. They're more attuned. Of course, some boys will grow up and their physical potential will be their main quality. Or some will be not so skilful but they are so speedy that they can have some success. But when they have both speed and skill, that is a good thing."

The afternoon training consists almost entirely of games and drills aimed at developing technique. "There's very little physical education. Everything is with the ball. We have a gymnasium, but we use it for playing football. When they play football for two hours, the boys are running and jumping, and just by playing they are developing their endurance. We test them from time to time, and the tests prove we are right, because they do as well in physical tests as the rest of the national under-15 or under-16 squads. Sometimes better."

Nor is tactical education a priority. "In the first two years we don't teach them team building because we have no team. Only in the third year does the Institute have a team. We concentrate on the first principles of the game. But not strategy. That comes later."

The importance of schoolwork, on the other hand, is stressed from the start. "They follow the normal studies, like any French children. Some are good, some are not so good. What we say is, 'OK, you were selected to come here because you are good at football, but the most important thing is studies. At the end of the three years here we shall see if you're ca-



Jérémie Alladière, Arsenal's new recruit, playing for France's under-15 team (above) and lining up two years ago for his local club, FC Rambouillet (below, second from right in front row)



pable of joining a professional club or not. Most of them do. But even if you do, we say you must know that out of five, six, or seven, only one will become a professional footballer. So you have to work at school, too."

All this costs about £2,000 a year for each boy, which is about what it would cost to send him to a minor English public school. And that, apart from the principle of the thing, is what

has raised hackles in the Alladière affair. A national investment has directly benefited a foreign enterprise.

"I don't know what can be done to prevent it," Méréle said. "Maybe the parents could sign a paper promising to sign a contract with a French club when the boy leaves the institute. But maybe that wouldn't be legal. Or they could promise, if he signed with a foreign club,

to pay the federation back."

In the case of Jérémie Alladière, it's too late for that. So what kind of a player is he? "Sort of... Van Basten," Méréle said, with a note of fondness in his voice. "Looks like him. Tall, slim, speedy, scores goals. Good player."

In the spring, the talent in question will pack his bags and be driven down the tree-lined avenues of Clairefontaine for

the last time - untouched, one can only hope, by the current psychodrama. A few weeks later he will arrive in London, where he will settle into accommodation with his grandparents, deputed to act as chaperones during his first two years in England. And then the rest of us may begin to learn what France has lost and Arsenal has gained.

A suture, as they say.

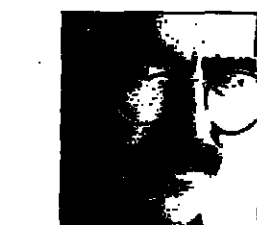
ON MONDAY

Richard Williams on the enigma of Nicolas Anelka

Welcome to new Olympic sport of bluff and fluff

GENERAL BARRY R McCaffrey, director of the White House Drug Policy Office, had concluded his briefing. For a man who was deployed to ring-fence Columbia's illegal drug operation, shaking up the International Olympic Committee on their home turf was pretty straightforward stuff.

Accordingly the general had told the World Conference on Doping in Sport that the guardians of the Olympic movement need to get democratic, pro-active and financially accountable. Soon. This message did not appear to go down well. At the conclusion of the Lausanne conference, the beleaguered 78-year-old whose infirm hand still guides this



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

wealthy private club made what might have been an accidental reference to his American guest as "General McCarthy".

What Juan Antonio Sama-

ranch clearly believes is a witch-hunt appears to the outside observer as no more than the pursuit of the blindingly obvious. But seeing is not believing whenever the IOC gather to arrange their affairs.

On the eve of the conference, Samaranch had issued a long list of corrections over media inaccuracies, pointing out that he had asked "several years ago" that people stop referring to him as "excellency", the diplomatic title from his days as Spanish ambassador. As the opening speaker at the conference rose to address the gathered membership, you can guess the first word which issued from his mouth. Change takes time in the IOC.

The poster campaign supporting this latest initiative featured the word "doping" beneath pictures of athletes whose features were blocked out by what resembled a blindfold. The connotations were unfortunate: a lack of vision, if not something more wilful.

But to return to the departing figure of General McCaffrey. As his entourage gathered around, one figure broke away from the group and paused beside a reporter before placing one word confidentially into his ear. "Background." The reporter prepared himself. This is cabinet-approved," rasped his mysterious new friend, before moving away.

A few seconds later he was

back again in confidential mode. "Deep background," he announced, before supplying information of such profound import that it dropped straight out of the startled reporter's mind.

The multi-layered American approach, as it happened, was appropriate for a three-day event dominated by rancour, uncertainty and conflicting rumours. Anonymous faxes had circulated detailing the supposed indiscretions of the man widely seen as Samaranch's successor, Dick Pound. Who sent them? Someone thought they knew. Someone else thought it was more complicated than it seemed...

Samaranch was being undermined by a rank-and-file

revolt over the new proposal that they could no longer vote for bidding cities. No he wasn't. The whole thing had been headed off with a deal. No it hadn't, because Samaranch said he was unaware of any such deal. But, no, he wasn't really unaware...

A new test for human growth hormone would be in place by the 2000 Olympics after the success of a four-year, IOC-funded research project. No it wouldn't. The test would be held up by further verification requiring another \$5m (£3.1m). No it wouldn't, said the research leader. Everything was still on course for Sydney.

The conference was a success, said Samaranch. It es-

tablished a new \$25m (£15m) anti-doping agency and put in place a two-year minimum ban for doping. No it wasn't a success, said attending governments, because they had yet to agree with the IOC over how to run or fund the agency, and the words "exceptional circumstances" in the rule on sanctions provided a get-out clause.

Much of the conference debate was well suited to the Olympic environment, forming as it did a linked sequence of perfectly circular arguments. Sebastian Coe, a member of one of the contributing working parties, looked like a man in need of serious diversion as he took a short break from the inaction on Wednesday.

One of my colleagues came up with just the thing to liven up Seb's day - an invitation to a sports bar in town where he could watch his team, Chelsea, play Oxford United on satellite television. Unfortunately, the bar turned out not to have the correct channel. So when the double Olympic champion and former MP walked in, all he had to watch was recorded skiing. But at least my friend was able to look on the bright side. Had it not been for a hold-up at a dinner for European sports ministers, that other well known Chelsea fan, Tony Banks, would have turned up as well. And he would probably have been less polite about it than Coe.

Five Nations' Championship: Scotland's coach in bullish form as Wales suffer late withdrawal of prop Young Telfer puts Scotland in mood to attack

IF HISTORY and the form book do not manage to convince anyone, then the late withdrawal of Dai Young from Wales' front row must go a long way to persuading fans that the heat will be on the Dragons at Murrayfield today, where a more confident Scotland will be looking to record their sixth win in seven matches on their own turf.

Young injured a calf muscle in training on Thursday and the decision to replace him with the Swansea prop Chris Anthony was taken at lunchtime yesterday. It leaves hooker Jon Humphreys as the sole member of the Wales front-five with any experience of Five Nations rugby.

No wonder Jim Telfer, the

Scotland coach, was in upbeat mood and attacking mode as he looked forward to this afternoon's game. Despite having coached his team to just one victory in eight full Tests since he took charge last year, he insisted: "We have been very competitive against Wales in the last 10 years and we have generally come out on top. We certainly have no inferiority complex as far as Wales are concerned."

Having accounted for the Dragons he rounded on the politicians in the game saying: "What is more I would say there is more of a buzz up here than there has been in the past three or four years, simply

because there has been so much politicking off the field. The public is sick of people pontificating about what should be done. They want to see players doing their stuff on the field."

Telfer in bullish mood is not someone to take into the game's china shop of administration and diplomacy. He clearly also wanted to strike a blow for the Celtic cause, especially in the light of what has gone on in Five Nations during the last 10 years.

England and France have won the championship four times each, compared with a solitary championship each for Scotland and Wales.

"I don't think there is that much difference between the teams," he said. "The Celtic nations are far less fearful of the

other two than they were previously. We played reasonably well at the back end of last year and we have taken something from that. Normally we are an outside bet, but I think we have a reasonable chance of beating Wales."

That they do. Their pack will certainly give the Welsh plenty to think about. Young had been brought into the side by Graham Henry to beef up the scrum, now Anthony, with just a handful of games for his club, must do the business.

Henry, the Welsh coach, singled out the Leslie brothers John (centre) and Martin (flanker), sons of former All Black captain Andy Leslie, as ones to watch in the Scotland team. "They are very good

players with terrific qualities. I wish they were Welsh actually."

Gregor Townsend is a proven player. When I was with Auckland Blues I made some inquiries about his availability for the Super 12s. We rate Townsend very highly in that part of the world."

Henry, who is making his Five Nations debut as a coach, is not exactly oozing confidence: "I'm a little nervous. There's so much tradition and history behind this tournament. It means so much to so many people."

Not least the 23 players in red shirts. If the pack can provide any sort of platform against the very competitive Scots, then the Wales backs will certainly threaten. While Matthew Robinson on the left wing is an un-

known at this level, there is no denying his blistering pace.

The Wales centres Allan Bateman and Scott Gibbs will give their counterparts John Leslie and Townsend a hard time. According to Bateman, Gibbs is better than ever: "Scott has always been the fulcrum of the back line since I came back to Wales," he said.

"He's a mammoth of a man. A great player. But there is something extra in his game this year. I can't quite put my finger on it, but he is really flying. He is back on the boil."

Whether this condition is infectious enough to spread to the rest of the side is another matter. The only certainty is that this match is not a foregone conclusion.

SCOTLAND v WALES	
at Murrayfield	
G Metcalfe..... Glasgow Cal	15 S Howarth..... Sale
C Murray..... Edinburgh Reivers	14 D James..... Pontypool
G Townsend..... Brive	13 A Bateman..... Richmond
J Leslie..... Glasgow Cal	12 S Gibbs..... Swansea
K Logan..... Warrington	11 M Robinson..... Swansea
D Hodge..... Edinburgh Reivers	10 N Jenkins..... Pontypool
G Armstrong..... Newcastle, capt	9 R Howley..... Cardiff, capt
T Smith..... Glasgow Cal	8 D Morris..... Swansea
G Bulloch..... Glasgow Cal	7 J Humphreys..... Cardiff
P Burnell..... London Scottish	6 C Anthony..... Swansea
S Murray..... Bedford	5 I Gough..... Pontypool
D Weir..... Newcastle	4 C Wyatt..... Ulster
P Watson..... Newcastle	3 C Chavis..... Swansea
E Pears..... Bath	2 M Williams..... Pontypool
M Leslie..... Edinburgh Reivers	1 S Quinlan..... Ulster

Replacements: 16 S Longstaff (Glasgow); 17 A Tait (Edinburgh); 18 I Fairley (Edinburgh); 19 B Pountney (Newcastle); 20 S Grimes (Glasgow); 21 D Hilton (Bath); 22 S Brotherton (Edinburgh).	
Referee: E Morrison (England).	
Kick-off: 4.15 (BST)	


Allan Bateman, the Wales, Lions and Richmond centre, is put through his paces at a training session ahead of Wales' Five Nations opener against Scotland at Murrayfield this afternoon

Gallagher throwing old boys into fray

IT MAY have escaped people's notice amid all the hype surrounding Will Carling's comeback with Harlequins, but the reason for the former England captain being picked for bench duty this afternoon for the visit of Allied Dunbar Premiership One leaders Leicester is the fact that Quins are short-staffed, writes David Llewellyn.

Zinzan Brooke and Thierry Lacroix are injured, as is Rob Liley, international duty has further claimed David Officer (Scotland A) and hooker Keith Wood (Ireland). The midfield crisis in particular is acute, forcing manager John Gallagher to turn to the former England captain who last played 13 months ago, as well as calling up another former Harlequin, David Pears, to start the game at stand-off.

The ageless art of Allan Bateman

IT WAS somehow typical of Allan Bateman that he should have timed his return to fully fledged Red Dragonhood to coincide with all the holding of back pages and locking up of dauntless that accompanied Will Carling's latest attention-grabbing publicity coup. At the precise moment England's shop-soiled silver spooner was seeking salvation inside a multi-coloured Harlequins shirt - camera, lights and cue the sincerity - Bateman was sitting in a limelight-free corner of a Cardiff hotel lounge, discussing his own rather more significant comeback in the only manner he has ever found agreeable. Quietly and without fuss.

"It's lovely to be back, but there's not much breathing space these days, is there?" he said. His gentle Maesteg lilt noticeably unaffected by a sporting sojourn that has taken him from the Welsh Valleys to swinging Richmond via the rugby league heartlands of Warrington and Sydney. "It's not that I'm getting old; I may look old, but I really don't feel it. I'm just saying that with Premiership rugby as intense as it is and a Five Nations' Championship in full flow, there's no respite. And to think Richmond have just drawn Leicester in the [Telfer's Bitter] Cup. That's nice, isn't it, sandwiched between an interna-

In a season dogged by injury, the craftsman centre has made a timely return to fitness for a revitalised Wales side determined to leave its mark on the Five Nations. By Chris Hewett

tional against Ireland and another in Paris?"

Bateman will survive, of course. True craftsman always do and, according to his peers, there are none truer than the 33-year-old Lion who resumes his international career against Scotland at Murrayfield this afternoon. Blessed with an outside break very nearly as smooth as Jeremy Guscott's and anticipation almost as sharp as Tim Horan's, he organises defences with the precision of a Phil de Glanville and runs Stéphane Glas angles better than Stéphane Glas. If he does not leave his opponents in need of a restorative session with the local panel-beater, like his spherical countryman Scott Gibbs, his tackling still has a rib-tickling crispness about it. What is more, he is enjoying the sort of timeless longevity that made Frank Buncie an All Black legend.

Agreed, he cannot boast much of a kicking game - during a punting session on the 1997 Lions tour of South Africa, Tim Rodber memorably asked him: "Are you sure you're not left-footed, Al?" He may even be on the slippery slope, in so far as he has made his annual mistake unusually early in the

northern hemisphere game. Well as Mark Taylor, the Swansea centre, performed in Bateman's injury-induced absence as Wales recovered some long-lost credibility against South Africa and Argentina before Christmas, the smart money was always riding on an early return to the status quo. Graham Henry, the Welsh coach, knows plenty about this strange old game and one of the things he knows best of all is that Bateman is an absolute diamond.

Not that the last year and a

half or so has been a cakewalk. Anything but.

To begin with, Bateman was officially declared, by no less an authority than Fran Cotton, the unluckiest Lion of the '97 pride. He produced his fair share of masterpieces during that never-to-be-forgotten campaign; indeed, his performances against the Emerging Springboks in Wellington and the mean-eyed enforcers of the Free State in Bloemfontein were definitive statements of the centre's art.

In all seriousness, though, he remains the closest approximation to a model professional currently at work in the

and the shoulder job that cost him two caps last November. The hardest knock of all, though, affected him emotionally rather than physically. In fact, it devastated him for the best part of a month. Bateman was preparing for the final match of last season's Five Nations, a lip-smacking Wembley set-to with the Grand Slam-chasing French, when his daughter Naomi, then six, lost more than 90 per cent of her sight.

"It was a desperate time,

Bateman took compassionate leave from duty against the Tricolours and thanks to his subsequent bumps and bruises, it is now 10 months since he last pulled the Welsh scarlet over his wise old head. For the average thirty-something, such a lengthy career break would inevitably have evolved into something permanent, especially as Wales are not as short of midfield options as they are of Test-quality prop forwards. The words "Bateman" and "average" are not often seen in close proximity, however.

"I didn't have the faintest idea whether or not I'd be playing until Monday morning," he said, "and when Graham told me I was in, I just nodded and said 'Thanks very much'. It was all I needed to know. Mark had two excellent outings in the pre-Christmas Tests and I'd have understood it if I'd been put on the bench for this one. He'll be disappointed, of course, but he has a few years on me, a career ahead of him as opposed to one that's largely behind him. Mind you, I've got my eyes on the World Cup this autumn. I feel every bit as good about myself as I did five or six years ago; I've been playing rugby and, more importantly,

training to play rugby for 16 years now and I'm in decent shape. I've another year left with Richmond and I won't look beyond that until I have it."

And so to Murrayfield, where Wales are more strongly fancied than at any time since the honey-sweet days of Gareth, JPR and the Viet Gwent.

Typically, Bateman is side-stepping the hype like Phil Bennett on spring heels. "Sure, Graham has given us a great deal of belief. He's very bright, very capable and he gives players the confidence they need to do the required job. But things can go badly wrong in this game almost without you noticing. By the time you wake up to the fact, you're buried."

"Look at Twickenham last year, when we started perfectly well against England, went points up and ended up losing by 60. You feel so helpless when that happens to you; when every tackle is just out of reach and every opposition drive goes that little bit too far. You have to stay right on your game for the full 80 if you're going to get anything out of a Five Nations international. I know people are talking about us, even more than they usually do at the start of a Championship. Quite honestly, though, I'd settle for any sort of win in Scotland. That would do nicely."

'I know people are talking about us, even more than they usually do. Quite honestly, though, I'd settle for any sort of win in Scotland'

The insidious allure of Mick Jagger and the pike

SCARY, LOVE, obsession, loathly, prehistoric, predators, stealthy. These are all words inspired by a tiny word: pike. Like all things that are not fully understood, people are scared of pike, although they are loved and obsessed over by the men that fish for them. Pike are predators. They eat trout and cuddly things like ducks, but they will eat anything smaller, sicker and more feeble than themselves. And that gives them quite a choice: the current UK pike record is 46lb 13oz. Then there's the teeth - very many of them in the large flat jaw that seems far too big for the mean, little head.

But - and I know this would happen - when you meet them in the flesh, pike make you fall in love with them. A bit like

ANNALISA BARBIERI
ON FISHING

Mick Jagger: you see pictures of him and think 'What's the fuss about?', but see him in the flesh and it seems the attraction is obvious. Pike are really beautiful fish, weird looking, but awesome none the less. And, contrary to popular belief, pike don't attack you. They only bite if you put your hand in their mouth.

Pike, kennel name Eozz Lucius, are solitary hunters. Their bodies are torpedo

shaped and built for short, aggressive bursts of activity. They live in clear water, in rivers, lakes and reservoirs and lurk around the bottom, in weed beds, waiting for their prey. Their bodies are perfectly marked for this subterfuge, camouflaging them amidst the vegetation. They are mysterious, dignified creatures; Ted Hughes even wrote a poem for them once.

So it was that I was beside

myself with excitement at going pike fishing with my friend, Mick Rouse, from the *Angling Times*, a former UK champion pike record holder (36lb in 1988). There was lots of equipment that was alien to me as a fly-fisherman. Wire trace in the place of nylon tippet (which pike would bite clean off) and a freezer box full of frozen dead fish in place of beautiful flies in Wheatley fly boxes. There were mackerel, smelt and hideous lampreys which are vile, blood sucking creatures so their corpses were now full of frozen blood. The show designer, Oliver Sweeney, a keen fisherman, had advised me to take frozen sardines, which he said the pike would go mad for - as they melt in the water the smell

brings pike from all around, he said. But I decided not to interfere with what Mick wanted to do, although he and I agreed that sardines were excellent bait, but that they disintegrated quickly as their flesh was soft.

We went to Tallington Lakes in Lincolnshire and had the place all to ourselves, which was good - all the fish were potentially ours. We set up two pike rods each, most with drop-back indicators that let out an electronic beep when a fish bit, and 15lb nylon line. This was the first revelation for me with coarse fishing: once you have cast out you can sit back and do nothing, just waiting for the drop back to tell you there is a fish on the end of the line. No won-

der coarse fishing is so popular! None of this constant casting around, watching your fly or line for fish activity. Two of the rods, however, were set up with bite-indicators that needed a bit of work on the fisherman's part. One was a sight indicator and one a drift float.

The latter is a square-shaped flag that floats above the water by virtue of the polystyrene underneath it. It was cast out and the flag acted as a sail that took the bait far out, much further than you could ever cast. If this flag bobs over the water, you know a fish is at the end of the line, so you strike. The line used with this set-up needs to be different: nylon line can stretch when wet and that would be no

good when you're trying to reel in acres of fine, so we used Fox braid no-stretch line and cast it out 60 yards. At the end was a smelt, a fish that smells deliciously of cucumber.

It was about 11.30am when all was set and Mick said that usually the pike bite at 11 o'clock and then again at 4pm. So we cast and hung around, and if there was no activity we recast again in a different place after half an hour or so. In this cold weather, fish are extremely lethargic so you have to find them and dangle the bait right over their nose. After a couple of hours, Mick got out a syringe. Aye, aye, I thought. We're going to jack up. But no, Mick got a mackerel bait that had been in the water and injected it with fish oil to

"refresh" it. Pike feed by smell, sight and vibration.

Then, bang on the 4 o'clock, just as Mick and I were chatting about some nonsense we looked round and the drift float had gone. He struck a pike was on. He handed the rod to me and I played the fish in, which involved lots of hauling the rod back, reeling in fast, hauling the rod back, etc. A bit like sea fishing. At this point we had more than 200 yards of line out so there was lots of hauling to be done. But very soon (they are lethargic remember) the pike was in. He weighed 10lb 11oz and I held my breath at his beauty, which is something I've never done with Mick Jagger.

Tallington Lakes
(01778) 347000
a.barbieri@independent.co.uk



THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.


THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 6 February 1999
RACING/27
PUNTERS' GUIDE
The former top jump jockey Steve Smith Eccles analyses today's Sandown Hurdle
Kerawl: Has not sparked at all this season.
Rainbow Frontier: The Pipe second string has each-way credentials after finishing third to Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham.
Alpine Panther: Winner of three of his four races this season and ran well in defeat behind Lady Rebecca at Cheltenham. Could make the frame.
Kings Measure: Stable in and out of form but this fellow could run a big race if he is on song.
Moonlight: Won in a back-catch at Warwick and well backed all week. His weight looks a winning one.
Three Partridges: Won on seasonal debut at Wincanton and can improve. Sure to be thereabouts at the death.
World Express: Very disappointing last time and needs to improve dramatically.
Teatr: Won well last time on ground at Kempton but may struggle with a five penalty.
Out Ranking: Put in his place recently despite winning five early-season races.
Melody Maid: Came good over three miles at Kempton last time, so this stiff two miles six furlongs will suit her. Needs to run the race of her life to win.
Just Nip: Won last time out but looks to be outclassed.
Globe Runner: Consistent sort but simply outclassed.
Montrose: Not likely to trouble the judge.
CONCLUSION: Martin Pipe is a past master in big handicaps and the highly progressive MOONLIGHT looks home and hosed. Jim Old's Three Partridges is coming to the boil at the right time and can give my selection most to do.

FA powerbrokers made in Sheffield



THE DISABLED have been in the spotlight the past week after Hoddle's crass comments about them, but in the Northern Counties East League Darren Bonnington goes about his business in the Maltby Main goal without fuss. One-handed saves are par for the course for Bonno, who was born without a left hand and has just a little finger and a thumb. He has compensated for his disability so well that opponents don't even know that he has one. Steve Fleetwood, his manager, said: "I have known Bonno a long time and he's a great lad and an outstanding keeper and I believe he has

When taken David Steadman, who he served 12 years earlier when manager of Kidderminster Harriers – his first signing. The only problem was that Steadman was serving a two-year sentence for a one year suspended for a £70,000 mortgage and wine bar. The authorities at Hewell Grange Prison, near Redditch, however, have allowed Steadman to play for the Dr Martens League Premier Division club under a resettlement scheme for offenders and the 29-year-old was allowed out to make his debut for the reserves against Telford United on Wednesday. Watching him was his friend and former Kidderminster team-mate, Lee Hughes, now with West

The former Wolves striker, who is back in England on loan to Barnsley during the J-League's close season, said of his new experience with San Frece Hiroshima: "There is plenty of skill in Japan but no one seems to take it personally. "You get the same amount of applause if you lose as when you win."

BOBBY ROBSON (main picture, flares) has enjoyed success as the England manager and with several European club sides since his Ipswich team won the FA Cup in 1978. Today (left) he's in contention to coach the national side again. Quite why, when the job turned him grey the first time, is anyone's guess.

THE SWEEPER'S KARMA CHAMELEONS

Manchester United who did the business for us at The Valley can cut down Forest and Arsenal - who destroyed our draw bet with a 1-0 verdict over Chelsea - can hammer West Ham at Upton Park. Fiorentina, top of Serie A and 3-1 winners at the San Siro earlier in the season, can beat Milan in Florence in Channel 4's Italian cracker, while on Monday Wimbledon can force a draw with Charlton at the unhappy Valley.

■ LIBERO WAGERS
 (£4.50 treble with Stanley): **Liverpool** to beat Middlesbrough (8-13); **Man Utd** to win at Nottingham Forest (4-7); **Arsenal** to win at West Ham (5-4).
■ SUNDAY SKY MATCH
Derby v Everton
Derby (£3, 4-6, Coral, William Hill & Stanley).
■ SUNDAY 4 ITALIAN JOB
Florentina v Milan

Floratina (£5.50, 10-11, Coral, William Hill & Stanley).
MONDAY SKY MATCH
Charlton v Wimbledon
Draw (£2, 9-4, Coral & Tote).
ORIGINAL BANK: £100.
CURRENT KITTY: £132.42!
TODAY'S BETS: £16.35 (including £1.35 tax paid on).

Paul Stevenson

MICHAEL PARKINSON
BARNSELY

Chat show legend
 "I was taken to my first game at five. At half-time I was asked "What do you think?" and I said "Can I go home now?" and I was told "No" and it started there. In the late 60s or early 70s I was over in America. It's like a sickness, but you try to find the results and I looked in one of the papers and it said 'Stockport County 2-1 Barnsley 1'. I spent \$15 or \$20 on phone calls trying to find out the worst, and discovered the score had actually been 1-1, which was almost as bad as 2-1. The best moment was when we were promoted to the Premiership. And watching Danny Blanchflower, well that was a joy and a pleasure."

Found on the Web: Football 365.
DANNY KELLY'S daily is probably the best source of up-to-date football news and features on the web. On top of all the breaking news you'd expect, the opinion polls such as yesterday's (which asked whether a Scot could be the England manager and looked likely to find a small majority against), the critical round-up of the day's media coverage, and the "boller" section (footballers talking cobbler) are all interesting staples. The "lookalikes", while amusing, have shown an increasing reliance on cartoon characters, but no one who looks at the Robbie Fowler-George Formby likeness can cry foul.
<http://www.football365.co.uk/>

QUITE THE ugliest football-related cuddly toy must be the Arsenal Gunnersaurus, a green monster in a club shirt. The shirt is, for some bizarre reason, tucked into a pair of what look like thermal long-johns. Rumours of Arsenal manager Wenger insisted on the club shop stocking these items (at £18.99 each) solely because they are sought after in France and he covets all things popular across the channel (usually players) are unlikely ever to be confirmed.

Unsung foreign
legionnaires No 25
KJELL OLOFSSON: The
33-year-old Swedish striker
played for Örgryte and Västra
Frölunda in his home country
before moving to Moss in
Norway and then, in 1996, to
Dundee United for £400,000.
Olofsson has won but a solitary
international cap, at the
Olympics, but has been a firm
supporters' favourite since he
moved to Scotland. Tangerines
fans sing 'Olofsson's in the air'
to the tune of 'Love is in the
air' to their hero, who was top
scorer at Tannadice last
season and the third top scorer
in Scotland. Perhaps played too
wide to fulfil his potential, Kjell
scored last week against
Dundermine nevertheless.



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

WHEN my beloved Barnsley beat Bradford City on 26 April 1997 to secure promotion to the Premier League, it was almost too easy to forget that our vanquished rivals had taken another step towards the trapdoor to the Second Division.

Nothing else mattered - the Reds were up, and that was it. The final whistle blew and the inevitable pitch invasion began. What was this, though - why were Bradford's supporters staying in their seats, clapping, cheering, as though they were the ones who had something to celebrate?

Of all the images I remember of that fateful afternoon, nothing sticks in my mind more than those sway fans, bedecked in orange and yellow, putting their own noses to one side to share in our joy.

Five days later, on the night of the General Election, 500

Barnsley supporters made the short journey to the Pulse Stadium to see Bradford take on Oldham Athletic in a game which some would argue was more important than the shenanigans between Blair and Major. Chris Kumar's team had to win, or fall through the trapdoor. Happily they did, and the 3-0 drubbing of Queens' Park Rangers on the final Sunday ensured the Bantams would be playing First Division football in 1998.

Now, almost two years on, as Bradford lie second in the First Division, the similarities between City's promotion push are strikingly similar to those of Barnsley. All season City have been considered unworthy of a place at the top end of the table, and the club have not been given the recognition their achievements merit.

I'm sure I speak for all

Barnsley's fans when I say that I hope Bradford make it. After the way those fans conducted themselves, they deserve their day in the sunshine. Regular supporters have long said the seventh-biggest city in England deserves Premiership football, and it would be fantastic if this could be their year.

Like Barnsley, because nobody has given much credence to their rise, there is no pres-

sure and no expectancy on the players to complete the job. As Danny Wilson will testify, this can bring with it an easier ride to the finish line. Back in 1997 Wolves were the big-name team who were expected to overhaul their unfancied rivals, but, Mark McGhee will remember, his side's required upturn in form never materialised. This season, for "big-spending Midlands rivals with a tendency to blow up" read Birmingham, not Wolves.

My, this is so spooky, I'm half expecting Bradford to get promoted, come straight down again, and then see Paul Jewell scot off to Leeds United after telling everybody he loved them and would not go. On second thoughts, there is surely just the one manager with such a lack of principles?

Make no mistake, whatever anybody says, Bradford de-

senior promotion and are well on course to get it. The club man, Geoffrey Richmond, has backed the manager, Paul Jewell, with a £1m fund for his investment, to pay off so soon as he will be testimony to the redoubtable Liverpoolian's ability to get the best out of his players.

Whether they can stay there or not is a different matter. The gap between the haves and the have-nots is becoming more difficult to bridge every year, and it is a chasm which can no longer be overcome by muck and nettles alone.

If City are to go up and stay there, it will require quality players with belief that they are able to compete as equals with the best players in the land, because once those heads go down, the death rattle sets in and remains until early May.

It's amazing to see players who produced football to such a level that it was allegedly "just like watching Brazil" reduced to struggling to put two passes together in a matter of weeks.

Once Chelsea did for us 6-0 at home in our third match, I knew, I just knew that we weren't going to make it. No matter how much bravado on behalf of the manager or defiance from the players, the game was up... on 24 August.

We had been stuffed in front of our own fans and the Sky TV cameras; the decline was swift. Just look at us now...

So while I hope Bradford do get there, I just hope that there is one similarity between our two clubs that City do not emulate. It's a different world up there, and I wish you luck, for you will need it.

You and I have been physically given two hands and two legs and half-decent brains. Some people have not been born like that for a reason. The karma is working from another lifetime. I have nothing to hide about that. What you sow you reap. You have to look at things that happened in your life and ask why. It comes around.

Glenn Hoddle, England coach

Thank God Mother Teresa, Leonard Cheshire and Florence Nightingale didn't take the Hoddle view of disabled people

Lord Alf Morris, former minister for the disabled

In a previous incarnation I must have been a failed football coach

David Blunkett, education minister, who is blind

I do as I'm told. They give me the pick and shovel and dig where they say to dig
Howard Wilkinson on the immediate future

I could have tried to save it all by revealing my mum works at a school for the disabled
Glenn Hoddie keeps it in the family

The players are being brainwashed
Gary Flinzer on the way golfers are over-coached

I've had my eyes gouged, the back of my head punched, my ribs elbowed and various parts of my anatomy squeezed. When any side starts those antics you know you've got them beaten
Ulster prop Rab Irwin reflects on Colomiers in the Heineken Cup final

Kettering on the climb to new pastures

The Poppies' blossoming challenge for promotion to the Football League is backed by an ambitious chairman with a taste for high life. By Phil Shaw

A WRECKED American bomber plane from the Second World War reputedly lies beneath Kettering Town's pitch, while the favoured site for their new stadium is a breakers' yard for old bangers. Yet the scrap that preoccupies their chairman is of neither the crashed nor crushed variety, but the one for promotion to the Football League.

Peter Mallinger has experienced the emotional extremes of big-time football, having been vice-chairman of his first love, Newcastle United, for a year at the start of the Kevin Keegan/Sir John Hall era. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine he is blasé about the prospect of Kettering winning the Nationwide Conference championship.

It is even disturbing his sleep, though not with the cold sweat over money and managers that afflicts many chairmen, or even the frustration of Saturday's last-gasp defeat by Doncaster. "Sometimes I wake up with the excitement of it all and go 'Vesssi!'," he explains, pushing his fist into his palm. "For this club to go into the League after 127 years... the prize is massive. And there's only 14 games left."

Kettering start today's home match with Dover a point clear of Cheltenham. Intriguingly, the third serious contenders are their Northamptonshire neighbours, the mega-rich Rushden & Diamonds. They make the eight-mile journey to Rockingham Road next month - a week after Kettering go to Cheltenham - with the return fixture on the season's last day.

"The Diamonds' rise has made our job much more challenging and added to the pressure," says Mallinger, who began his business career in Kettering and bought "The Poppies" from the liquidators for £100,000 soon after Max Griggs merged Rushden Town

and Irthlingborough Diamonds. "It has also provided some nice local rivalry, though I'd be happier if we were competing on level terms financially."

"A number of people from this town drifted off to support them because they were a winning side, whereas there wasn't much to cheer here. But I'd never say anything against Max because he's a terrific guy, and he's doing exactly what I'd love to do. I just wish I had his money."

Kettering's challenge this season has surprised many, including the bookmakers, who listed them as 20-1 ninth favourites. Fifteen months ago they were bottom of the Conference after taking 14 games to win in 1997-98. They eventually finished 14th, the same as a year earlier.

'I'd love to be sitting here in June with a copy of the Third Division fixture list, and I'm confident it will happen'

Why the dramatic improvement? "Two words," says Mallinger. "Peter Morris. Before my time here, Peter was manager for five years and took Kettering to runners-up. But there was a big upheaval and he was forced out. He went off to manage Boston United and then King's Lynn."

"When we parted with our manager last summer, I went for Peter. Some people said we shouldn't be looking back, but his feeling was that he came to do a job: to get this club into the League. He's just picked up where he left off."

"He assured me, even before he'd put his squad together, that we'd be in the top six. At Newcastle when John Hall

looked you in the eye and said something would happen, you believed him. It's the same with Peter."

Only three of last season's side survived Morris' revamp. One, Carl Adams, delivers bread in Birmingham for eight hours from 2am on Saturdays, and according to Mallinger has to have his eyes propped open with matchsticks after the bus picks him up. The contrast with the 30 full-timers available to Rushden's ex-Kettering manager, Brian Talbot, could hardly be greater.

Morris, who managed at Crewe, Mansfield and Peterborough and coached Newcastle, has relied on free transfers and his knack of spotting young talent. One of Kettering's discoveries, the speedy, 6ft 11in striker Ben Wright, has guested for Leeds and Bolton reserves; another, the midfielder Matt Fisher, is also attracting Premiership scouts.

Mallinger is aware that some of the clubs promoted from the Conference have strayed out of their depth. Asked whether Kettering could cope with League football, he rubs his hands. "Oh yes, please. It's what we've been planning for. The support's there, too. We had to coax them back at first, but we've had well over 8,000 at the last three home games."

"What Macclesfield and Halifax have achieved shows that we shouldn't be frightened. I'd love to be sitting here in June with a copy of our Third Division fixture list, and I'm quietly confident it will happen."

As he speaks, he surveys the ground from the elevated office that nestles in one corner. It used to be the manager's bolt-hole, and Ron Atkinson, who launched his managerial career at Kettering, describes it as the best office he ever had. Soon, though, it may be rubble.

"We want to move because the days when you could finance a club by revenue from the turnstiles are gone," argues Mallinger. "We've got no facilities for corporate entertainment like they have at Kidderminster or, dare I say it, the Diamonds."

Kettering hope to be in their new ground by 2001, possibly at the cars' graveyard by the A14. Perhaps, when the bulldozers move in at their current home, the mystery of whether a US fighter really did nose-dive into the pitch will be solved. In the meantime, the plan is to prove that League status is no mere flight of fancy.



Steve McClaren (right) bids farewell to Derby County's Stefano Erano yesterday

Raymonds

McClaren made United coach

STEVE MCCLAREN knows just how Howard Wilkinson felt after becoming Alex Ferguson's new right-hand man. Wilkinson claimed his head was in a spin after he was appointed caretaker manager of England following Glenn Hoddle's sacking and McClaren used the same words to describe his feelings at joining Manchester United.

Thirty-six hours after Ferguson asked his Derby counterpart, Jim Smith, for permission to speak to his first-team coach, McClaren was appointed United's assistant manager. McClaren agreed to join United yesterday after talks

BY DAVID ANDERSON

at Old Trafford and later teamed up with the players at their Nottingham headquarters. The Yorkshireman will make his first appearance alongside Ferguson at Nottingham Forest today and will be formally welcomed to the club on Monday. Ferguson approached Smith after Wednesday's Premiership match between the teams at Old Trafford and McClaren revealed he was still coming to terms with the events of the past day and a half. "It's all happened pretty quickly and my head is still in a spin," he said.

McClaren takes over from reserve-team coach Jim Ryan, who had been Ferguson's assistant since Brian Kidd left to become manager of Blackburn. Smith had been grooming McClaren to succeed him at Pride Park and the former County player admitted that while he was sad to be leaving he could not turn down United.

"The chairman, the board, Jimmy and all the rest of the staff have been brilliant," he said. "But in football things happen quickly and people move on. It's a great opportunity for me."

McClaren, 37, who began his

coaching career as youth development officer at Oxford, will now be viewed as the front-runner to succeed Ferguson when the United manager finally decides to retire in three or four years' time.

Smith was disappointed to lose McClaren, who is regarded as one of the best and most innovative young coaches in the game, but he has moved swiftly to appoint Ray Harford as his replacement for the rest of the season. Harford, who helped Blackburn win the Premiership title in 1998, has been out of the game since he left Queen's Park Rangers last year.

Milan threatened by Batistuta

BEHOLD THE angel Gabriel. Gabriel Batistuta, the amazing Argentine striker, takes centre stage as Fiorentina, the league leaders and the club he captains, entertain Milan in Channel 4's live Serie A game in Florence tomorrow.

"Batigol" has scored a sensational 18 goals in 19 games in the world's classiest league this term - including a hat-trick in Fiorentina's 3-1 victory over Milan at the San Siro earlier in the season - and his outstanding form is the principal reason why Fiorentina hold a chance of

ITALIAN PREVIEW

BY IAN DAVIES

winning their first Scudetto for 30 years. The club has 41 points, three ahead of Lazio and five ahead of Milan (third).

Batistuta leads but, this season, Fiorentina are no one-man band. Fiorentina used to be Serie A's most inconsistent side at the back, but coach Giovanni Trapattoni's shrewd summer signings, Jörg Heinrich and Moreno Torricelli, have strengthened their defence and

up front, Edmund, the talented and temperamental Brazilian, and Portugal's Rui Costa have given Batistuta great support.

Fiorentina have an awesome 100 per cent record at home this term. Their 10-match winning run at their Artemio Franchi stadium leaves them fast closing on the Serie A record 14, set by Torino in 1975-76.

Milan are a resurgent force after suffering their worst two seasons in two decades. Alberto Zaccaroni, their new coach, and Oliver Bierhoff, the German striker, who both joined the club

from Udinese in the summer, have helped Milan turn the corner. After initial sulking from the Liberian George Weah, the Brazilian Leonardo and Maurizio Ganz, Zaccaroni has imposed an exciting 3-4-3 formation on his club with effect.

Fiorentina are at full strength but the Milan goalkeeper Sebastiano Rossi is still suspended. Weah returns for Milan from international duty. OTHER GAMES: Sampdoria v Bari; Internazionale v Empoli; Lazio v Perugia; Salernitana v Udinese; Sampdoria v Cagliari; Venezia v Roma; Vicenza v Fiorentina; Venezia v Juventus v Parma.



The Kettering chairman Peter Mallinger (right) and manager Peter Morris

TODAY

FOOTBALL

3.0 unless stated

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

1 Aston Villa v Blackburn

2 Chelsea v Southampton

3 Leeds v Newcastle

4 Leicester v Sheffield Wed

5 Liverpool v Middlesbrough

6 Middlesbrough v Manchester Utd

7 Portsmouth v Coventry

8 West Ham v Arsenal

9 Wolves v Oxford Utd

10 Wolves v Oxford Utd

11 Wolves v Oxford Utd

12 Wolves v Oxford Utd

13 Wolves v Oxford Utd

14 Wolves v Oxford Utd

15 Wolves v Oxford Utd

16 Wolves v Oxford Utd

17 Wolves v Oxford Utd

18 Wolves v Oxford Utd

19 Wolves v Oxford Utd

20 Wolves v Oxford Utd

21 Wolves v Oxford Utd

22 Wolves v Oxford Utd

23 Wolves v Oxford Utd

24 Wolves v Oxford Utd

25 Wolves v Oxford Utd

26 Wolves v Oxford Utd

27 Wolves v Oxford Utd

28 Wolves v Oxford Utd

29 Wolves v Oxford Utd

30 Wolves v Oxford Utd

31 Wolves v Oxford Utd

32 Wolves v Oxford Utd

33 Wolves v Oxford Utd

34 Wolves v Oxford Utd

35 Wolves v Oxford Utd

SECOND DIVISION

10 Arsenal v Albion

11 Arsenal v Albion

12 Arsenal v Albion

13 Arsenal v Albion

14 Arsenal v Albion

15 Arsenal v Albion

16 Arsenal v Albion

17 Arsenal v Albion

18 Arsenal v Albion

19 Arsenal v Albion

20 Arsenal v Albion

21 Arsenal v Albion

22 Arsenal v Albion

23 Arsenal v Albion

24 Arsenal v Albion

25 Arsenal v Albion

26 Arsenal v Albion

27 Arsenal v Albion

28 Arsenal v Albion

29 Arsenal v Albion

30 Arsenal v Albion

31 Arsenal v Albion

32 Arsenal v Albion

33 Arsenal v Albion

34 Arsenal v Albion

35 Arsenal v Albion

36 Arsenal v Albion

37 Arsenal v Albion

38 Arsenal v Albion

39 Arsenal v Albion

40 Arsenal v Albion

41 Arsenal v Albion

42 Arsenal v Albion

43 Arsenal v Albion

44 Arsenal v Albion

45 Arsenal v Albion

46 Arsenal v Albion

47 Arsenal v Albion

48 Arsenal v Albion

49 Arsenal v Albion

50 Arsenal v Albion

51 Arsenal v Albion

52 Arsenal v Albion

53 Arsenal v Albion

54 Arsenal v Albion

55 Arsenal v Albion

56 Arsenal v Albion

57 Arsenal v Albion

58 Arsenal v Albion

59 Arsenal v Albion

60 Arsenal v Albion

61 Arsenal v Albion

62 Arsenal v Albion

63 Arsenal v Albion

64 Arsenal v Albion

65 Arsenal v Albion

66 Arsenal v Albion

67 Arsenal v Albion

68 Arsenal v Albion

69 Arsenal v Albion

70 Arsenal v Albion

71 Arsenal v Albion

72 Arsenal v Albion

73 Arsenal v Albion

74 Arsenal v Albion

75 Arsenal v Albion

76 Arsenal v Albion

77 Arsenal v Albion

78 Arsenal v Albion

79 Arsenal v Albion

80 Arsenal v Albion

81 Arsenal v Albion

82 Arsenal v Albion

83 Arsenal v Albion

84 Arsenal v Albion

85 Arsenal v Albion

86 Arsenal v Albion

87 Arsenal v Albion

88 Arsenal v Albion

89 Arsenal v Albion

90 Arsenal v Albion

91 Arsenal v Albion

92 Arsenal v Albion

93 Arsenal v Albion

94 Arsenal v Albion

95 Arsenal v Albion

96 Arsenal v Albion

97 Arsenal v Albion

98 Arsenal v Albion

99 Arsenal v Albion

100 Arsenal v Albion

101 Arsenal v Albion

102 Arsenal v Albion

103 Arsenal v Albion

104 Arsenal v Albion

105 Arsenal v Albion

106 Arsenal v Albion

107 Arsenal v Albion

108 Arsenal v Albion

109 Arsenal v Albion

110 Arsenal v Albion

111 Arsenal v Albion

112 Arsenal v Albion

113 Arsenal v Albion

114 Arsenal v Albion

115 Arsenal v Albion

116 Arsenal v Albion

117 Arsenal v Albion

118 Arsenal v Albion

119 Arsenal v Albion

120 Arsenal v Albion

121 Arsenal v Albion

122 Arsenal v Albion

123 Arsenal v Albion

124 Arsenal v Albion

125 Arsenal v Albion

126 Arsenal v Albion

127 Arsenal v Albion

128 Arsenal v Albion

129 Arsenal v Albion

130 Arsenal v Albion

131 Arsenal v Albion

132 Arsenal v Albion

133 Arsenal v Albion

134 Arsenal v Albion

135 Arsenal v Albion

136 Arsenal v Albion

137 Arsenal v Albion

138 Arsenal v Albion

139 Arsenal v Albion

140 Arsenal v Albion

141 Arsenal v Albion

142 Arsenal v Albion

143 Arsenal v Albion

144 Arsenal v Albion

145 Arsenal v Albion

146 Arsenal v Albion

147 Arsenal v Albion

148 Arsenal v Albion

149 Arsenal v Albion

150 Arsenal v Albion

151 Arsenal v Albion

152 Arsenal v Albion

153 Arsenal v Albion

154 Arsenal v Albion

155 Arsenal v Albion

156 Arsenal v Albion

157 Arsenal v Albion

158 Arsenal v Albion

159 Arsenal v Albion

160 Arsenal v Albion

161 Arsenal v Albion

162 Arsenal v Albion

163 Arsenal v Albion

164 Arsenal v Albion

165 Arsenal v Albion

166 Arsenal v Albion

167 Arsenal v Albion

168 Arsenal v Albion

169 Arsenal v Albion

170 Arsenal v Albion

171 Arsenal v Albion

172 Arsenal v Albion

173 Arsenal v Albion

174 Arsenal v Albion

175 Arsenal v Albion

176 Arsenal v Albion

177 Arsenal v Albion

178 Arsenal v Albion

179 Arsenal v Albion

180 Arsenal v

Premiership: Some observers thought £6m fee was too high but Spurs' fit-again forward feels he can repay investment

Ferdinand fired up for good times

IT SEEMS odd to suggest that his time spent as a steam cleaner, a van driver, and a painter and decorator can be put to good use now as he battles to re-establish himself as one of the leading strikers in English football. But this is what Les Ferdinand, once one of the most feared footballers in the penalty box, uses to help in his fight to fulfil the promise Tottenham Hotspur believed in when they forked out £6m for him two and a half years ago.

Since that move from Newcastle United, where Ferdinand had hitherto enjoyed much success first without, and then with Alan Shearer, his reputation as one of the most lethal finishers in the business has, together with his body, taken a bit of a pounding. Other strikers have either leaptfrogged over him in the jostling for international selection or, in the case of a certain Michael Owen, emerged during his absence.

A frustrated Ferdinand currently finds himself injury-free, which is a bonus judging by the past two seasons, but not a guaranteed starter in the Spurs first team. At the age of 32, some might feel his best days are now past him. The man in question, however, begs to differ.

"Maybe a few years ago that might have been the case, but players have been educated in terms of looking after themselves, and with the right diet, nutrition and exercise regime, I see no reason why I should not be playing at the highest level for a good four or five years," he explains, as we sit in one of the Tottenham dressing-rooms.

"Having the kind of background I've had - coming through relatively late, and with all those manual jobs beforehand - has helped me both as a player and a person. I look around the Tottenham squad today, and there are many youngsters here who only know about football. They just don't seem to be as hungry for it as I believe they should be.

"Some of them might be in for a shock later if things were to go wrong for them in their careers, like injuries, or loss of form. I've never forgotten my days driving a van, steam cleaning, or painting. The majority of my family still do those kind of jobs. I appreciate what I have. I've been lucky, and it's because of this that I've been able to come through the past

Today United, who are bidding for their fifth title in seven years, travel to Nottingham Forest for a fixture between top and bottom that would have looked a foregone conclusion a matter of weeks ago.

Since the arrival of Ron Atkinson at the City Ground there has been a perceptible lightening of mood, however, and as a former United manager he likes nothing better than putting one over his former employers. As he did last season, when his Sheffield Wednesday side halted what had, until then, seemed to be an unstoppable title bandwagon.

"The Big Ron Effect secured only Forest's second win of the season at Everton last Saturday and despite the recent yo-yo record at the City Ground, United have failed to win there in their last four visits.

"There's definitely a positive attitude to a very difficult fixture," Dave Beasant, Forest's



IAN STAFFORD

two and a half years with my confidence intact.

"The experience and memories I have from playing in successful sides - Newcastle, England, and to a lesser extent, QPR - have kept me going. I want to get back to those days. I don't want to have already reached my peak."

Unlike some players I could think of, Ferdinand's refreshing honesty means he does not hide behind any excuses when it comes to his Tottenham career to date. He is more than happy to hold his hands up.

"The supporters know what I'm capable of because they've

seen me produce the goods elsewhere.

"But they haven't seen me do it in a Tottenham shirt and they have every right to reserve their judgement on me until I succeed. People felt £6m was a lot of money for a player of my age, and at this moment you'd have to say, with my record at Spurs, it was too much. But I aim, of course, to change that."

He insists his confidence in his own ability remains high but, like any striker, he needs to start scoring some goals.

"Kevin Keegan once described me at Newcastle as a monster who needed to be fed."

"I've been lucky, and it's because of this that I've been able to come through the past

the sidelines, watched a few chances go begging, and heard commentators say: 'If Les Ferdinand had been playing he would have had a field day'. Then I get a chance to play and nothing seems to come my way.

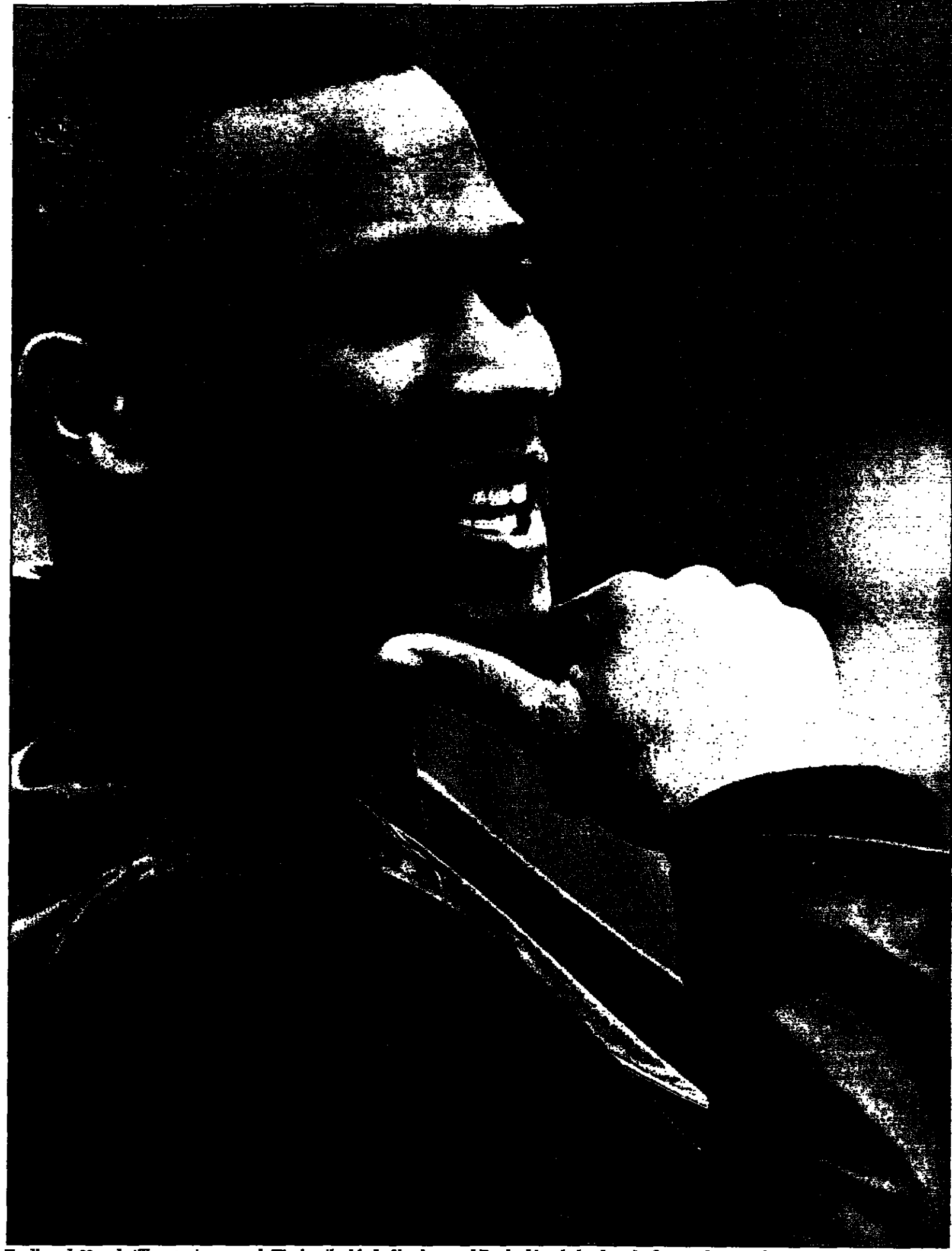
"I've been a 25-goals-a-season man at every club I've played for, except Tottenham. My goals-per-game ratio here has been appalling. Last season I scored five goals. I thought: 'What the hell's going on here?' But I honestly believe it's beginning to look up for me. I've come off the pitch recently and thought that only a goal had been missing from an otherwise good performance. I just need an extended, injury-free run."

For a man with Ferdinand's recent record, an injury-free run might be a lot to ask for. Does he consider himself these days to be one of those players daubed with the negative tag of "injury-prone"?

"I don't really know," he replies, having given the subject some thought. "I know there are some players lucky enough to have never experienced a major injury, and there are others who never get off the treatment table. I guess it's just the way I play the game. I'm always in the thick of things, and I'm liable to fall awkwardly, or get clattered by a goalie or defender. It's happened too much for my liking, though, and I hope that this time I can get on with playing. I've come a long way from the White City Estate and I've achieved a lot, but there's no way I'll be satisfied until I've done myself justice at Spurs."

Coming a long way includes a fitful England career: something, of course, which Ferdinand finds frustrating to analyse. "Right now, I have no desire to play for England," he admits. "If I start banging in the goals for Tottenham then it might come for me, but I've never felt I was given a fair crack of the whip at international level.

"I always saw myself as a second-choice striker, always on the fringe looking in. Sure, I played a few times, but it was almost always because someone else was injured. I had a bit of a run under Graham Taylor but, other than that, I've been in and out. Terry Venables didn't believe a Shearer-Ferdinand partnership could work. Keegan obviously did at Newcastle."



Ferdinand, 32 and still eager to succeed: 'Having the kind of background I've had has helped me both as a player and a person' Robert Hallam

Still things, as Ferdinand rightly accepts, could be worse. At Tottenham, George Graham seems to be turning the corner for the club. "It's looking like George will be part of the fixtures and fittings here for quite some time," is how Ferdinand puts it. "All the players know he

wants to bring new faces in, and we're hoping we're not the ones he wants to replace. We've endured the bad times, so we want to play a part in the good ones we know are not far away."

Like, for example, a cup win at Wembley. This is possible in the FA Cup, where Spurs visit

Leeds in the fifth round, and also in the Worthington Cup, where they are a victory at Wimbledon away from reaching the final. Incredibly, a semi-final is as far as Ferdinand has ever ventured.

"I've never played at Wembley for any club, and never

won an English cup," he admits. "I played for Besiktas when they won the Turkish cup, but it's not quite the same, is it? My trophy cabinet contains a few England caps and the 1996 PFA Player of the Year award, of which I am very proud. But there are no win-

ner's medals. There's not a lot to show for what I've done. I'd like to put that straight while I still have the time."

Maybe his chance will come this year. Tottenham's fortunes are beginning to look up under Graham. Ferdinand is hoping the same can be said for him.

United wary of Big Ron Effect O'Callaghan to lead Celtic into new era

YOU DO not need to be a Liverpool supporter to feel the weight of the goals. Chelsea, Aston Villa and Arsenal have also spent the week ruing Dwight Yorke's winner at Charlton last Sunday that marked a wind change in the Premiership.

That goal pushed Manchester United to the top for the first time this season apart from the stagger in matches which gave them an advantage for a day. A further victory over Derby in midweek pushed them four points clear and rivals who have spent weeks looking over their shoulders for the anticipated charge from Old Trafford have had to alter their line of vision 180 degrees.

Today United, who are bidding for their fifth title in seven years, travel to Nottingham Forest for a fixture between top and bottom that would have looked a foregone conclusion a matter of weeks ago.

Since the arrival of Ron Atkinson at the City Ground there has been a perceptible lightening of mood, however, and as a former United manager he likes nothing better than putting one over his former employers. As he did last season, when his Sheffield Wednesday side halted what had, until then, seemed to be an unstoppable title bandwagon.

"The Big Ron Effect secured only Forest's second win of the season at Everton last Saturday and despite the recent yo-yo record at the City Ground, United have failed to win there in their last four visits.

"There's definitely a positive attitude to a very difficult fixture," Dave Beasant, Forest's

BY GUY HODGSON

goalkeeper, said: "It was a lively dressing-room after we beat Everton. You can get used to that losing feeling and I think a few players were thinking on Sunday 'This is much better than I've been feeling for the past few months. Let's keep it that way'."

Alex Ferguson, named manager of the month yesterday at the same time Yorke was picked as player for January, is wary. "You don't get easy games anywhere, and we are expecting a tough match. They have a new manager and he will have every body thinking they can win the

World Cup. You know what Ron's like."

Today is unusual if not unique in that the Premiership's top four all play on a Saturday and Chelsea and Villa will be anxious to recover their winning touch after losing last weekend.

Chelsea, whose defeat at Arsenal last Saturday marked the end of a 23-match unbeaten League run, meet a Southampton team whose status as sacrificial lambs had a rapid rewrite when they defeated Leeds comprehensively at The Dell.

Villa, meanwhile, have acquired a ragged edge of late, losing to Second Division Fulham in the FA Cup and to New-

castle last week. Much more of this and John Gregory's image, so pristine it could advertise washing powder, will acquire its first grubby edge. Their opponents are Blackburn, who scored nine goals without reply in the two fixtures between the clubs last season.

With due respect to all the above, the man on whom most attention will focus, however, is Paolo Di Canio. The irascible Italian makes his home debut for West Ham today and with glorious timing the opponents are fourth-placed Arsenal, the very team who pushed him over the limit when he laid hands on referee Paul Alcock in September.

Di Canio has promised not to go volcanic this time, although there was more than one meaning to his attempt to play the meeting down. "I made my mistake against Arsenal," he said, "but it could have been against any other team." Anyone who has managed him will vouch for that.

Harry Redknapp is the new man with the privilege and he believes that only a lack of match fitness will prevent Di Canio proving his doubters wrong. "People who know the game don't think he's a bad signing," the West Ham manager said. "Andy Gray, Kevin Keegan and Ron Atkinson have all said he's a good signing, so who is it who thinks he isn't? The Press? Well there's no problem is there? I know he's a great player."

Alcock, incidentally, makes his return to the Premiership for the first time since the Di Canio shove and, of course, he has got a low-key match with little at stake to ease him in: Forest versus United.

Middlesbrough have no problems pinpointing their high tide mark, a 3-2 win at Old Trafford on 19 December, since when the sea has disappeared over the horizon and they have collected just two points from their last 15. Which is not the best portent to carry to Liverpool, whose last game at Anfield was the 7-1 slaughter of Southampton.

Everton will hope their time has come tomorrow away to Derby because they risk being sucked into the relegation positions if it has not. It is now 5hr 29min since they scored a goal.

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

BY SIMON BUCKLAND

According to McCann, O'Callaghan, who is 59, was headhunted by Celtic's selection committee and once proposed as the main candidate, the board unanimously agreed his appointment.

O'Callaghan was educated at St Aloysius College, where he is vice-chairman of the board of governors, and built a successful business career after graduating from Glasgow University. He was the financial controller of Stakis plc and then the company's financial director for 16 years until 1989, while in the last decade he has been guiding a number of companies. Needless to say, he is also a lifelong Celtic supporter.

McCann enthused: "I have no doubt Frank's abilities and experience in heading public companies and management within the leisure industry will be of great value in leading the board to continued growth and success."

The Celtic managing director pointed to the prioritising of the playing side at Parkhead as the reason for profits being down despite increased turnover. The Glasgow club yesterday announced its interim results revealing that turnover was up 24.5 per cent over the same period a year earlier to a figure of £13.3m thanks to 53,000 season ticket sales. The rise was facilitated

by the completion of Celtic Park to a 60,400 capacity, making it the largest club ground in Britain, with an average attendance of 59,024.

Despite that profits fell by £5.5m from last year due to the signings of Vidar Riseth, Johan Mjallby, Lubomir Moravcik and Mark Viduka, with only Malky Mackay who went to Norwich for a nominal sum, bringing in a fee. McCann admitted the failure to reach the European Champions' League followed by an early UEFA Cup exit was "disappointing", but stressed there were now signs of "a stronger first-team squad".

Celtic will welcome back Jackie McNamara to the fold after a recent knee problem for the Premier League trip to Hearts today, but Craig Burley (groin) and Marc Rieper (toe) remain among the long-term injured.

Hearts should welcome back the injured trio of Stefano Salvatori, French goalkeeper Gilles Rousset and Steve Fulton for the trip to Celtic, though defender Gary Locke remains a major doubt.

Meanwhile, Rangers will be hoping to extend their lead at the top when they travel to Dunfermline tomorrow. The leaders have received a boost with the news that Colin Hendry will return to action by the end of the month. The centre-back has responded well to treatment on a groin problem and manager Dick Advocaat estimates the player will return within weeks.

		PREMIERSHIP TABLE											
		Home					Away						
		P	Pts	G	D	L	P	Pts	G	D	L		
Last met on 1st. Upcoming matches													
1	Man Utd	24	47	+25	9	3	1	32	13	4	5	2	19
2	Chelsea	23	43	+15	7	4	0	17	6	4	6	2	17
3	Aston Villa	23	43	+13	8	2	1	22	12	4	5	3	17
4	Arsenal	23	42	+13	7	5	0	16	4	4	3	8	7
5	Leeds	23	36	+13	7	3	1	28	5	2	6	4	16
6	Everton	23	35	+16	6	3	2	28	13	4	2	6	15
7	Wolves	23	35	-4	7	4	1	18	11	2	4	5	11
8	Derby	24	34	-2	4	5	2	11	9	4	5	4	12
9	West Ham	23	33	-5	6	9	2	16	14	3	3	6	9
10	Middlesbrough	23	32	+4	4	7	1	16	10	3	4	4	16
11	Sheff Wed	23	30	-2	5	4	2	19	16	2	5	5	10
12	Leicester	23	30	-2	5	3	3	17	16	2	6	4	11
13	Newcastle	23	28	-4	6	2	4	16	15	1	5	5	12
14	Sheff Utd	23	26	+2	5	3	4	13	7	2	2	7	16
15	Barnsley	23	24	-12	2	7	3	8	6	3	2	6	10
16	Coventry	23	23	-9	5	4	3	17	13	1	9	6	19
17	Blackburn	23	22	-5	5	3	4	14	12	0	4	7	18
18	Southampton	23	20	-23	4	2	6	18	21	1	3	7	25
19	Charlton	23	17	-11	2	4	5	15	13	1	4	7	21
20	Nottn Forest	23	16	-22	1	6	4	9	13	2	1	9	28

Weekend guide to the Premiership

MATCH OF THE DAY

Nottm Forest v Man United

Last season: No fixture



ALEX FERGUSON (right) will try to ignore speculation over his future as his table-topping side travel east to take on the table-propping Forest, who will be trying to do the unlikely and secure a second consecutive win under Ron Atkinson (left).

The Manchester United manager has been linked with the England post vacated by Glenn Hoddle this week, but will be focusing all his attention on the Premiership. Ferguson believes his team will be in for a hard game against Atkinson's men following Forest's victory - their first win for 19 matches - at fellow relegation candidates Everton last Saturday. "You don't get easy games anywhere, and we are expecting a tough match," Ferguson said yesterday.

By PAUL STEVENSON

"Forest have a new manager in Big Ron, and he will have everybody thinking they can win the World Cup. You know what Ron's like, but we'll be ready for it." Ferguson rejected suggestions that statistics point to an easy victory for his side. "It doesn't really matter much at this stage of the season, it is what you end up with that is important. It is important to take something from every game and that is what we are trying to do."

Current form still suggests that the three points will be going to Old Trafford, and history also points to the visitors, who have not lost any of their four Premiership meetings at the City Ground.

This game is given extra significance as Atkinson is a former United manager, and was succeeded by Ferguson 12 years ago. A win for United will see them move on to 50 points, but they will remain top of the table regardless of the outcome tomorrow.

Forest will move off the bottom, at least under Monday, if they can upset the form book. However, there are doubts about England winger Steve Stone (thigh), Pierre Van Hooijdonk (ribs) and on-loan Norwegian Stale Stensaa (thigh).

For United, David Beckham and Andy Cole are set to start after being rested in the 1-0 win over Derby on Wednesday night. Henning Berg, who missed the game with a knee injury, should also be available.

However, Ryan Giggs will not be available because of a hamstring injury which restricted him to just 10 minutes against Derby. Ferguson's team go into this game groaning under the weight of recent plaudits; Dwight Yorke won the Player of the Month for January, and Ferguson himself has been named Manager of the Month. New Old Trafford No 2, Steve McClaren is likely to be in the dug-out for the first time today.

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): Schuster, G. Neville, Johnstone, Sam, Irwin, Beckham, Moore, Butt, Stanger, Cole, Yorke, Scholes, Solskjaer, P. Neville, May, Brown, Berg, Van der Gouw.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): Boscent, Harkes, Palmer, Hyde, Stensaa, Stone, Johnson, Gemmell, Rogers, Van Hooijdonk, Darcheville, Christie, Porumbo, Barry-Williams, Wilson, Lytle, Gray, Sheppey, Freedman, Gussie, Bonister, Armstrong.

Suspensions: None.

Referee: P. Alcock.



Aston Villa v Blackburn

Last season: 0-4

THE BLACKBURN striker Chris Sutton could make a timely return to Premiership action today, given the departure of Glenn Hoddle as England manager. Having fallen out with Hoddle over his repeated selection for the B team, Sutton seemingly now has the chance to rebuild his international career. However, as it will be Sutton's first appearance for over two months, he may have to settle for a place on the bench. Kevin Gallacher faces another month out with a calf injury. Keith Gillespie (ankle) and Nathan Blake (neck) are also injured, while Jeff Kenna and Stéphane Henchoz are both suspended. Darren Peacock could be recalled.

Aston Villa are missing six players, with Lee Hendrie banned, Stan Collymore still undergoing counselling and central defender Ugo Ehiogu suffering from a fractured eye socket. Midfielders Alan Thompson and Mark Draper are recovering from ankle injuries and goalkeeper Mark Bosnich is still battling to shake off a shoulder problem. There is good news for Villa, though, with Dion Dublin available again after injury. Simon Grayson could make a rare appearance in midfield.

ASTON VILLA (from): Oakes, Wilson, Scimeca, Southgate, Barry, Wright, Taylor, Aston, Grayson, Dublin, Joachim, Hughes, Ferrante, Vassell, Lee, Rachael.

BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): Flan, Davidson, Broome, Peacock, Taylor, Duff, Dunn, McAra, McKinlay, Wilcox, Ward, Jensen, Davies, Sutton, Flowers, Croft, Dally, Warcom.

Suspensions: Aston Villa: Hendrie. Blackburn: Kenna, Henchoz.

Referee: K. Burge (Trompsburg).

Chelsea v Southampton

Last season: 4-2

CHELSEA'S SPANISHARD Albert Ferrer (calf) is doubtful. Fellow defender Bernard Lambourde will definitely miss the game with a groin problem but Michael Duberry is back in contention after being injured at Arsenal last weekend. Gianluca Vialli must decide whether to restore himself up front alongside Gianfranco Zola or keep the teenage striker Mikael Forssell in the line-up after his two goals against Oxford in midweek.

Southampton's new signing, Chris Marsden, is likely to make his debut. Marsden, who completed his £200,000 move from Birmingham at the start of the week, is in contention as Matt Le Tissier is expected to be out for a month after tearing a hamstring during the 3-0 win against Leeds last week. Mark Hughes (heel) is expected to recover in time to face his old side, and winger Stuart Ripley should be fit after a calf problem. Defender Scott Marshall is out with a stomach bug. Defender Richard Dryden is out for three weeks with an ankle injury. Francis Benali is still two weeks away from returning from a broken arm, and David Hirst and John Beresford are out with long-term knee injuries.

CHELSEA (from): De Gea, Hinchcock, Leeson, Babayaro, Desailly, Le Saou, Ferrer, Duberry, Myers, Peiricou, Di Matteo, Wise, Goldbeck, Newton, Nichols, Morris, Terry, Perks, Vialli, Zola, Forssell.

SOUTHAMPTON (from): Jones, Hiley, Dodd, Lundekvam, Collier, Kachout, Marsden, M. Hughes, Oakley, Beattie, Ostrander, Ripley, Monk, Bridge, Howells, Wainwright, Stengard.

Suspensions: Southampton: Monkou.

Referee: R. Harris.

Leeds v Newcastle United

Last season: 4-1

BOTH SIDES enter today's match with injury problems affecting their line-ups. The Leeds manager, David O'Leary, is denied the services of Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink through suspension, and Stephen McPhail and Bruno Ribeiro with injury, who are this week's most notable absentees from a first-team squad decimated by injury in recent months. Jimmy's fellow Dutchman, Clyde Wijnand, could earn a rare start up front alongside the 18-year-old Alan Smith, while new signing Willem Korsten could also appear in an attacking role.

Newcastle must do without the services of the England captain, Alan Shearer, who is suspended for the first time in his career. Also missing for the same reason is Nikos Dabizas, and the new French defender Didier Domi is unlikely to play because of a hamstring injury. Rob Lee, who could have played his last match for the Magpies after speculation linking him with a move back to London, has Achilles tendon trouble, but Laurent Charvet, Andy Griffin and on-loan Metz striker Louis Saha are all in the squad after recovering from knocks.

LEEDS UNITED (from): Murray, Haslam, Rodhe, Wertheimer, Korsten, Wijnand, Ribeiro, Bowyer, Hopkin, Granville, Hille, Kewell, Harte, Woodgate, Jackson, Smith, Robinson.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): Green, Harper, Barton, Griffith, Charvet, Howie, Hughes, Hamman, Speed, Glass, Solano, Brady, Geordie, Koutsou, Anderson, Saha, Pearce, Doughty.

Suspensions: Leeds: Hasselbaink. Newcastle: Shearer, Dabizas.

Referee: U. Rennie (Sheffield).

Leicester v Sheff Wed

Last season: 1-1

LEICESTER'S NEW £2m Icelandic international signing from Bolton, Arnar Gunnlaugsson, joins the squad immediately. If Emil Heskey does not pass a late fitness test on a groin injury, the iceman may make his home debut. Neil Lennon returns from suspension while Frank Sinclair and Muzzy Izzet have recovered from the injuries that kept them out at Middlesbrough last week. Should the Foxes win today, it will complete their first seasonal League double over the Owls since 1970-71.

Sheffield Wednesday's results have begun to show an improvement in recent weeks, and their manager, Danny Wilson, has virtually a full squad to choose from for today's trip down the M1. With the exception of two long-term absentees with knee injuries, Earl Barrett and Ian Nolan, Wilson has no further problems, with midfielder Danny Sonner available again. Wednesday are still hoping to have their goalkeeper Pavel Szczek's three-match ban, for his sending off against Derby last week, commuted to one game. He plays for the last time before suspension today.

LEICESTER CITY (from): Kelle, Arphenad, Guppy, Sinclair, Walsh, Elliott, Dillamore, Tugwell, Karmali, Imprey, Zograla, Snodden, Campbell, Parnes, Izzet, Lennon, Harte, Cottle, Wilson, Pettit, Gunnlaugsson.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): Smick, Ashworth, Jonk, Newsome, Walker, Carver, Houghton, Wilson, Zograla, Snodden, Campbell, Parnes, Izzet, Lennon, Harte, Cottle, Wilson, Pettit, Gunnlaugsson.

Suspensions: Leicester: None.

Referee: G. Widd.

...And statistics

Is it worth the wait for goals?

CHELSEA, MORE than anyone, know all about "the game of two halves", not least the dying minutes of the second period. Gianluca Vialli's players have scored 11 times this season in the last 15 minutes. On four occasions their last goal has been bagged in the 90th minute and on a further six occasions it has come in the last 10 minutes. Tore Andre Flo, with five goals in the last 15 minutes of games, is the Blues' 'last gasp' master. Such 'last gaspism' has added 14 points to Chelsea's season.

Manchester United's Dwight Yorke is not a bad second-half stayer himself. It was an 89th-minute Yorke header

that took Manchester United back to the summit against Charlton last weekend and another Yorke second-half strike on Wednesday against Derby that stretched their lead to four points. Yorke's strength at the start is telling too - he's scored four times this season in the opening 15 minutes of League games.

Of the 566 goals scored in the top flight this season, 238 have come in the first 45 minutes and 328 (a rather significant 90 more) have come after half-time.

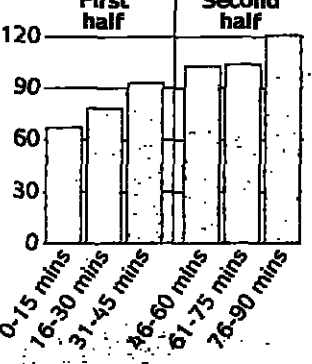
Nearly twice as many goals are timed in the last 15 minutes of a game as the first 15, even allowing for time added on, the

build-up in goal scoring remains significant.

Alex Ferguson's side have now scored 31 of their 51 goals in the second half. Newcastle and Arsenal score more of their goals in the first half. It should have been no surprise to the Gunners' fans that the crucial Dennis Bergkamp goal against Chelsea last weekend came as early as the 32nd minute. Chelsea fans might well have been surprised that their team, on this occasion, failed to manage a last gasp strike. At the other end of the game it's Newcastle who lead the way with early goals - a quarter of theirs have come in the first 15 minutes.

Goals worth waiting for

The 1998-99 season



Last gasp goals

Team	Goals timed after 75 mins	Total goals	Last gasp %
Chelsea	11	34	32
Charlton	8	26	31
Leicester	7	25	28
Wimbledon	8	29	28
Southampton	6	23	26
Sheff Wed	6	25	24
Leeds	8	36	22
Middlesbrough	7	32	22
Newcastle	6	28	21
Arsenal	5	24	21
Liverpool	9	44	20
Aston Villa	7	35	20
Man Utd	10	51	20
Blackburn	4	22	18
Tottenham	5	29	17
West Ham	4	25	16
Nottm Forest	3	19	16
Coventry	3	23	13
Derby	3	23	13
Everton	1	13	8
Total	121	566	21

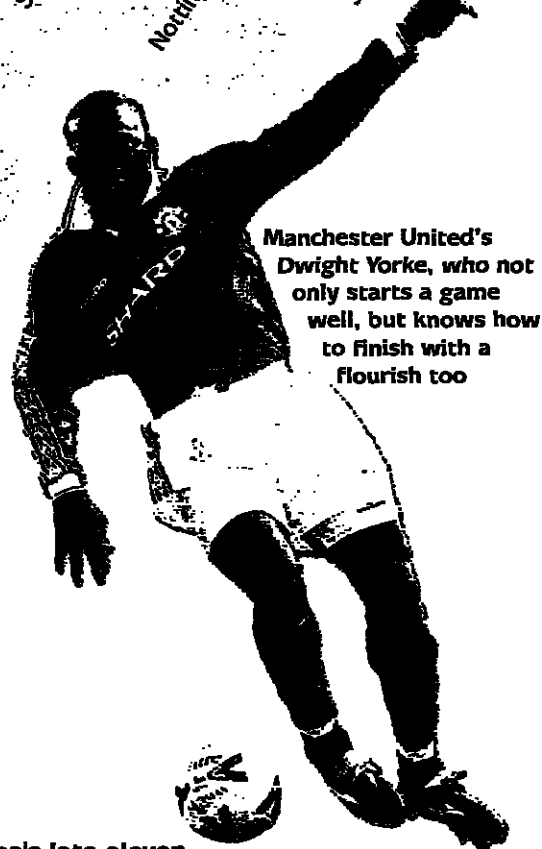
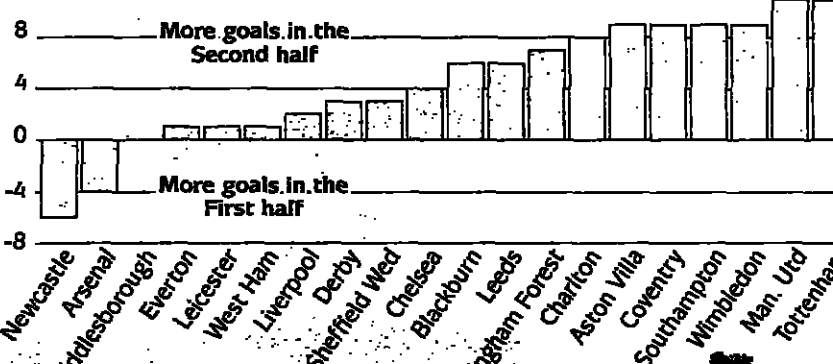
Early strikes

Team	Goals timed in first 15 mins	Total goals	Early strike %
Newcastle	7	28	25
West Ham	6	25	24
Coventry	4	23	17
Arsenal	4	24	17
Sheff Wed	4	25	16
Aston Villa	3	35	9
Blackburn	3	22	14
Derby	3	23	13
Southampton	3	23	13
Charlton	3	26	12
Tottenham	3	29	10
Wimbledon	3	29	10
Man Utd	5	51	10
Liverpool	4	44	9
Chelsea	3	34	9
Leicester	2	25	8
Middlesbrough	2	32	6
Leeds	2	36	6
Nottm Forest	1	19	5
Everton	0	13	0
Total	67	566	12

Statistics: Brian Sears / Nick Harris

The late late bias

Premiership clubs' uneven goal distribution this season



Manchester United's Dwight Yorke, who not only starts a game well, but knows how to finish with a flourish too

Chelsea's late eleven

26/9/98	Chelsea	2	Midwinters	0	(Zola 82)
17/10/98	Chelsea	2	Charlton	1	(Poyet 88)
8/11/98	West Ham	1	Chelsea	1	(Babayaro 76)
21/11/98	Leicester	2	Chelsea	4	(Zola 90)
9/12/98	Chelsea	2	Aston Villa	1	(Flo 90)
16/12/98	Man Utd	1	Chelsea	1	(Flo 83)
19/12/98	Chelsea	2	Tottenham	0	(Poyet 80, Flo 90)
16/12/99	Chelsea	2	Coventry	1	(Di Matteo 90)

Strikers who start well

Striker	Goals in first 15 minutes of League games
Dwight Yorke	4
John Hartson	3
Alan Shearer	3

Strikers who 'finish' well

Striker	Goals in final 15 minutes of League games
Tore Andre Flo	10
Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink	7
Tony Cottee	5
Marcus Gayle	5
Clive Mendonca	5

Derby County v Everton

Last season: 3-1



DERBY'S JAMAICAN striker Dean Burton could be recalled against Everton tomorrow. Burton had a positive effect when he replaced Kevin Harper at Old Trafford on Wednesday and, with Dean Sturridge doubtful with a hamstring strain, could partner Paulo Wanchope up front. The Rams' Italian duo Stefano Eranio and Francesco Balzano could also be recalled by manager Jim Smith. The home side will be looking to improve upon a poor recent record of having scored only six goals in their last 10 home matches.

The Merseysiders have only lost twice in their last 12 visits to Derby, but will be without the suspended Danny Cadamari-

teri and Marco Materazzi for the trip to Pride Park. Walter Smith will also be without striker Michael Branch, and the former Derby defender, Craig Short who are both out through injury. John Collins, Alex Cleland and Slaven Bilic remain long-term absentees. Everton have gone six League games without a victory, scoring just two goals. They have gone five hours and 29 minutes without a goal, but if there is any grain of hope to grasp as they travel tomorrow it is that they have found the net four times in their last seven Premiership away matches, which is a rate above their overall average this season.

They need a rapid improvement to avoid yet another fight against relegation and manager Smith is expected to put Don Hutchison up front with 18-year-old England Youth striker Francis Jeffers on the bench. Olivier Dacourt and Ibrahim Bakayoko are expected to start after being named as substitutes for last week's 1-0 home defeat by Nottingham Forest.

DERBY COUNTY (from): Pryor, Carbone, Smith, Larsson, Carlsby, Poyet, Bonham, Dorgu, Burton, Wanchope, Balzano, Eranio, Harper, Hunt, Knight, Schmeichel, Sturridge, Elliott.

EVERTON (from): Byrne, Ward, Unsworth, Wilson, Dunne, Bell, Grant, Dacourt, Hutchison, Barry, Ooster, Bakayoko, Jeffers, Jones, Milligan, Simonsen.

Suspensions: Everton: Materazzi, Cadamari.

Referee: G. Pot.

Liverpool v Middlesbrough

Last season: No fixture



STEVE McKANAMAN will get a rare chance to show the red faithful why he is worth the £1m Real Madrid will pay him to desert when he starts only his second game for Liverpool since the beginning of November. Patrik Berger's hamstring injury allows manager Gerard Houllier to reinstate 5-3-2 formation. Jamie Redknapp is expected to have recovered from a slight groin strain, and Jamie Carragher will return after a one-match ban. Rigobert Song, who played in the reserves on Tuesday along with McKanaman, will probably have to wait for his full Anfield debut. He started last week's 2-1 defeat at Coventry, but is still not considered fully match fit by Houllier.

Middlesbrough's striker Hamilton Ricard is doubtful through injury. The Colombian damaged an ankle during last weekend's 0-0 draw with Leicester at the Riverside Stadium, and will be replaced by the Dane Mikkel Beck if he fails a late fitness test. Manager Bryan Robson has no other injury worries as Boro seek their first League win at Anfield since a 2-0 victory in March 1976.

LIVERPOOL (from): James, Hoggan, Carragher, Staunton, Rabb, Martos, Karlsson, Bjornby, McKanaman, Ince, Redknapp, Gerrard, Owen, Fowler, Riekie, Song, Thompson, Fiedler.

MIDDLESBROUGH (from): Schwarzer, Beresford, Fleming, Tost, Cooper, Vickers, Palfister, Gordon, Stamp, Mustoe, Muddison, Gascoigne, Townsend, Beck, Ricard, Drake, Moore.

Suspensions: None.

Referee: P. Jones.

Tottenham v Coventry

Last season: 1-1



DAVID GINOLA has been named in a 19-man Tottenham squad but manager George Graham may decide it is too soon to recall the French maestro after a hamstring injury. Ginola missed last Saturday's 1-1 draw at Blackburn through suspension and was not fit enough to reclaim his place in midweek against Wimbledon in the FA Cup, having limped off against the same opposition after an hour a week earlier. He is back in training and Graham insists that the injury is not as bad as first suspected, but Andy Sinton looks likely to retain the left-wing role - with Ginola being saved for next Saturday's FA cup tie at Leeds. Graham has increased his midfield options with Tim Sherwood's £1m arrival but the former Blackburn captain has to challenge either Allan Nielsen - who scored twice in midweek - or Stefan Freund for a place. It is more likely he will start on the bench.

Coventry have midfielder George Boateng suspended for the match at Tottenham, along with full-back David Burrows. Paul Telfer steps into the breach after his one-match ban. Marc Edworthy is expected to take over from Burrows at left-back.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): Walker, Carr, Vega, Cornwell, Edinburgh, Monty, Fox, Tarico, Anderson, Freund, Sherwood, Calderwood, Nielsen, Sinton, Ginola, Ferdinand, Armstrong, Werten, Bardsen (94).

COVENTRY CITY (from): Hedman, Nielsen, Shaw, Williams, Edworthy, Telfer, McAllister, Solovod, Froggatt, Whelan, Huckerby, Clement, Breen, Glacchin, Alois, P. Hall, Ogilvie (94).

Suspensions: Coventry: Boateng, Burrows.

Referee: S. Lodge.

West Ham v Arsenal

Last season: 0-0



IAN WRIGHT will not play for West Ham against his old club as he is still recovering from a knee operation. Eyal Berkovic and Samassi Abou have both recovered from illness while Ian Pearce and Trevor Sinclair are both eligible after suspension. Steve Lomas and Stan Lazaridis have both had flu and will not figure. Still on the injured list are Richard Hall, Marc Kellner and Javier Margas, who is still in Chile receiving treatment.

Arsenal's Patrick Vieira returns from suspension and will replace Remi Garde. Nigerian striker Nwankwo Kanu, signed from Internazionale three weeks ago, will not arrive in the country until today and does not figure in Arsene Wenger's plans. Dennis Bergkamp and Nicolas Anelka will again spearhead the Gunners attack despite an impressive substitute appearance by another new French signing, Kaba Diawara, in last Sunday's win over Chelsea. Diawara will be on the bench again. Steve Bould (ankle), Gilles Grimandi (ankle) and Fredrik Ljungberg (ankle) are being given another week to fully recover from their injuries. Portuguese forward Luis Boa Morte is still out after a cartilage operation last month.

WEST HAM (from): Histing, Brackley, Dicks, Rudlock, Sinclair, Krison, Di Camo, Ferdinand, Morrice, Lampard, Pearce, Abou, Hodges, Fox, Berkeov, Omerovic, Monty, Cole.

ARSENAL (from): Seaman, Dixon, Keown, Adams, Winterburn, Paltrow, Vieira, Poyet, Overmars, Bergkamp, Anelka, Garde, Hughes, Diawara, Upton, Wuss, Manninger (94).

Suspensions: West Ham: Pearce, Sinclair.

Referee: J. Winter.

Charlton v Wimbledon

Last season: No fixture



CHARLTON HAVE taken just three points from their last 13 Premiership matches and have failed to keep a clean sheet in their last 11. Last Sunday, Manchester United looked like being held to a draw before Dwight Yorke scored a last-minute winner, which just goes to show that Alan Curbishley's side can defend like demons for 89 minutes but it will all be for nothing if they succumb at the death. While The Addicks will take heart in the knowledge that Wimbledon have not scored a goal in more than three hours of football, they themselves have never scored more than one goal in any League game against the Dons.

Joe Kinnear's side are seventh despite their recent poverty in front of goal, and with one route into Europe having been closed by their 3-0 defeat at Tottenham in the FA Cup, the Dons will redouble their efforts to take at least a UEFA Cup place through the Premiership runners-up spots. Record signing John Hartson has been given a three-match ban for the training ground incident with Eyal Berkovic while at West Ham, but the Welshman is available for selection for this match.

SOURCE: no to be announced.

Suspensions: Wimbledon: Hughes.

Referee: D. Ellery.

SPORT

ARSENAL'S FRENCH SOURCE P22 • BORN-AGAIN FERDINAND P30

Five Nations' Championship: Lansdowne Road prepares for France side in search of third successive Grand Slam
Ireland stoke fires of self-belief

SWAMPED BY their own past and saturated in memory, the Irish love nothing better than a historical date or two to stoke the fires of debate. Here, then, are some dates they might like to consider as they stroll, hale and hearty and full of confidence, towards Lansdowne Road this afternoon.

Ireland's 15 good men and true last won a Grand Slam in 1948 and claimed their most recent Five Nations title and Triple Crown a small matter of 14 years ago. They have not beaten the French since 1983, have not avoided defeat by them since 1985 and have lost their last 10 opening Championship matches. Reasons to be cheerful? On second thoughts, forget the rugby and crack on with the drinking.

If there is an unmistakable crackle of optimism in Dublin this weekend, it has no obvious basis in fact or logic. As Donal Lenihan, who packed down alongside Moss Keane and Willie Duggan and Fergus Slattery on that famous afternoon in '83, said yesterday: "People seem to forget that France are going for their third successive Slam. That, in itself, will make them desperately hard to beat." As a player, Donal would have been thumping the tub with the best of them. Now, as team

BY CHRIS HEWETT
in Dublin

manager, it was in his interests to rein in the wilder expectations rather than excite them.

Ulster's tearfully romantic European Cup victory last weekend certainly raised Irish spirits in advance of this last Five Nations jamboree, but their successful strangulation of a less than complete and wholly off-colour Colomiers side was not really so much to write home about. Similar tactics this afternoon - welly it up in the air, run like the clappers

INSIDE

Chris Hewett on the art of Allan Bateman
Scotland-Wales preview, Page 23

and belt the first Frenchman who goes within a country kilometre of the descending ball - might rally the 49,000 crowd for 20 minutes or so, but would ultimately condemn Paddy Johns' side to a 14th consecutive defeat at the hands of the urbane Tricolours.

Mick Doyle, that garrulous man of Blackrock (not to mention University College Dublin and Cambridge) could be heard yesterday extolling the virtues

of the Irish tight five, in which Johns himself acts as the meanest and most ruthless of enforcers. "You simply can't fault our forwards," insisted Doyle. "In the last five years, they competed equally and magnificently with every pack in the world."

Very true. They will do so today, too; Keith Wood and Paul Wallace are world-class operators, as is Jeremy Davidson. It may well be that they will give the French a serious going-over in the darkened recesses, especially as Christian Castres and Fabien Pelous are short of match hardness and Franck Tournaire is still liable to blow a gasket at the first sight of a clenched fist. But the Irish will require more than an edge at scrum and line-out to break the habit of an entire generation and take their Grand Slam ambitions into a second international weekend.

They will need to command the tackle area and they will need to kick their goals. Sadly, they may do neither. Andy Ward's knee injury deprives them of their warrior king, their Slattery-style, bust-a-gut breakaway flanker whose ball-winning ability was so much in evidence for Ulster last weekend. Dion O'Cuinneagain is quick and capable, but he will struggle to ruffle Olivier Magne's pristine feathers to quite the same degree.

As for the kicking, Ireland will have only themselves to blame if David Humphreys' occasion marksmanship lets them down. They should, quite clearly, have picked the ultra-dependable Niall Woods for the senior side rather than the A team; not only would he have popped over the three-pointers in his sleep, but he would have joined Conor O'Shea and Justin Bishop in bringing London Irish's exhilarating three-pronged attacking partnership to bear on a French side unfamiliar with the sight of emerald-shirted three-quarters running with the ball rather than shoeing the leather off it.

The likelihood must be that Magne, Philippe Benetton and



Ireland's Keith Wood is tackled by Kevin Maggs and Gárvan Dempsey during training for today's game against France

Patrick Bolger/Inpho

IRELAND v FRANCE	
at Lansdowne Road	
C O'Shea	London Irish
Bishop	London Irish
Bel	Dungannon
K Maggs	Bath
G Dempsey	Terenure
D Humphreys	Dungannon
C McGuinness	St Mary's Col
P Clohesy	Young Munster
K Wood	Harlequins
P Wallace	Saracens
P Johns	Saracens, capt
J Davidson	Castres
E Miller	Terenure
D Cuinneagain	Sale
V Costello	St Mary's Col
E Ntarmack	Toulouse
P Bernat-Salles	Barriz
R Dourthe	Stade Français
F Comba	Stade Français
T Lombard	Stade Français
T Castaignède	Castres
P Carbonneau	Brive
C Califano	Toulouse
R Ibanez	Perpignan, capt
F Tournaire	Toulouse
O Brozzet	Baylès-Bordeaux
F Pelous	Toulouse
P Benetton	Agen
O Magne	Brive
T Liévremont	Perpignan

16 R. Henderson (Wagga), 17 E. Bawd (Glasgow), 18 C. Scully (Lond), 19 T. Brennan (St Mary's Col), 20 M. Gilver (Shannon), 21 J. Horgan (Dungannon), 22 R. Hodge (Widnes).

Replacements: 16 A. Gomes (Stade Français), 17 D. Auzière (Pau), 18 C. Lascoux (Stade Français), 19 M. Raymond (Narbonne), 20 T. Clède (Pau), 21 S. Marmonier (Stade Français), 22 M. Del Haxo (Colomiers).

Referee: P Marshall (Australia)

Kick-off: 2.15 (BBC1)

the calmly creative Thomas Liévremont will govern the loose exchanges and allow Philippe Carbonneau and Thomas Castaignède to organise things to the French benefit. Castaignède, the

cheeky chappie from Castres whose youthful grin manages to make Arwel Thomas look like Old Father Time, had been conspicuous by his absence since he contributed 14 points and a mountain of instinctive

swagger to his country's Test victory over Fiji in Suva last June. Last weekend the stand-off, fully recovered from his shoulder surgery, swanned back into the reckoning by giving Italy an equal amount of

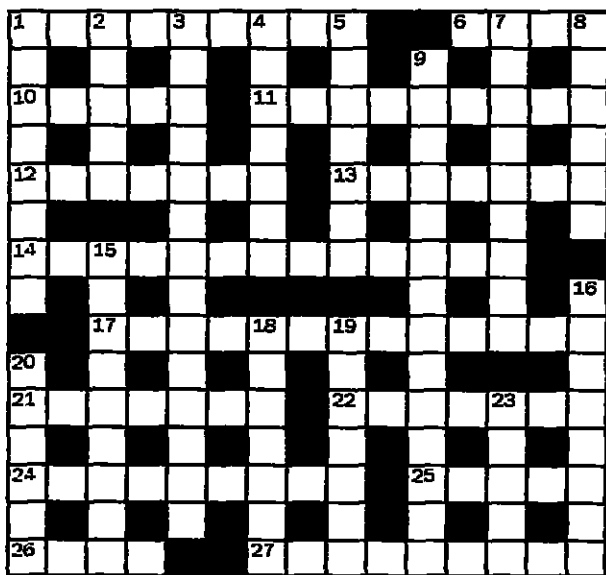
grief in Genoa. It does not seem fair, somehow. When Doyle coached Ireland to the title 14 years ago - their 15-15 draw with France denied them a Slam - his players chipped in £25 apiece to buy in

some advice from a professional nutritionist. Today, they have psychologists, physiotherapists and personal masseuses, as well as dieticians. Will the army of support staff help them go one better than in '85? Probably not.

THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

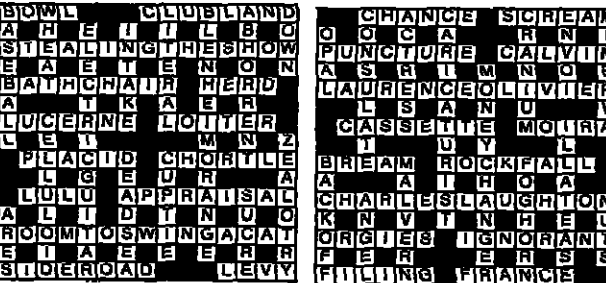
No.3839 Saturday 6 February

by Mass



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



ACROSS

- Puritan finds Paris and Nice disreputable (9)
- Thought facing should be removed - had crack? (4)
- Sign of decay, losing fragment of canine (5)
- Forerunner of the "Big Bang" (9)
- Deal in automobiles (7)
- These could put mannequins in the shade (7)
- Sinful, led astray, fellow's greedy (4-8)
- A bookmaker excluding a backing system? (8-5)
- Bone forming rigid Greek character's back (7)
- Wavering light produced by good painter, it's said (7)
- Great amount of water? Valid, maybe, for this (5-4)
- Trendy big house of a S. American ruler (5)
- File play void of Pawn (4)
- Pool, note, surrounded by scree of granite (9)

DOWN

- Dreamer's history captivating hospital worker (8)
- Take morning off in the country from plant (5)
- Scarcely an alternative for this (14)
- Got enrolled, losing little time (7)
- Bent, twisted everyone in game (7)
- Modelled one clear Eastern fabric (9)
- Don't imbued with acceptable restraint (6)
- Indolent one participating - without choice, reportedly (14)
- Person with an eye for communications? (3-6)
- Separate and set out, spread (8)
- Almost shy, about to criticise instruments (7)
- Disregard Cat's odd name, say, at first (7)
- Wine around Italy beginning to spoil in existing state (2,2,2)
- Drink, second drink (5)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5SL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: F. Elton, West Bridgford; R. Mitchell, Southampton; M. Nuttall, Stockport; S. Wood, Trowbridge; J. Ray, Birkenhead.

Wenger's England advice

FOOTBALL

BY BILL PIERCE

ARSENAL'S double-winning manager, Arsène Wenger, last night ruled himself out of contention for the England job and advised the Football Association to pick a home-grown man to take over the national team from Glenn Hoddle.

His comments were in direct contrast to those of David Sheepshanks, a leading member of the FA committee who will select the new man. Sheepshanks yesterday refused to rule out a foreign coach for the job, saying that England would go for the best person available.

Meanwhile Wenger, the overseas manager with the most successful record in England, said he believes the Football Association's next choice to pick up what many regard as a poisoned chalice, must be experienced, aged over 50 - and an Englishman.

"I personally think England must have an English manager because it is a big country with a big passion for football

and people identify better with a guy from their own country. For me it would be difficult to explain to somebody why a country of 50 million people cannot find one in their own right."

Wenger said that Kevin Keegan, Bryan Robson, Terry Venables and the man currently in charge in caretaker-capacity, Howard Wilkinson would all fit the bill. But he said: "I'm hearing that Keegan and Robson don't want to do it and I would think it would be very hard for Venables to go back. In fact, I read now that you don't want him again."

Meanwhile Sheepshanks, the Ipswich chairman who has been talked about as a future chairman of the FA, has declared that non-English managers should be considered among the candidates.

Sheepshanks, who will be a

leading member of the FA international sub-committee charged with drawing up a shortlist, would prefer to appoint an English-born manager but added: "I believe that we should not unnecessarily restrict ourselves from selecting from all of the highest calibre of candidates."

Tim Flowers has shocked Blackburn Rovers by asking for a transfer - to put Aston Villa on red alert for his signature.

Flowers broke the surprise news on the eve of Blackburn's trip to Villa, an ironic and possibly significant piece of timing. Villa will lose Marc Bosnich in the summer when he can walk out for nothing and Flowers is one of the names at the top of their wanted list.

Flowers revealed the reasons behind his request yesterday and said: "I've told the manager I don't want to hang around too long as a number two. That's no disrespect to anyone here. I'm at a stage in my career when I don't want to be

sitting on my backside. The boss was fully in agreement with that. We've not had a row and this is nothing financial. It's just a matter of wanting a game."

Rovers would want around £2.5m for a keeper who was once Britain's most expensive when he signed during Kenny Dalglish's reign.

Meanwhile, John Gregory has admitted he is not bothered whether or not Stan Collymore returns to Aston Villa. He added: "If he comes back and gets his head down and gets on with his job and does enough to justify him being in the team, he will play. There is no problem. But I do not want to talk any more about Stan Collymore."

The Croatian international Silvio Maric arrived on Tyneside yesterday to complete his £3.5m move to Newcastle.

Lawrie Sanchez, the former Wimbledon player, was last night named manager of Second Division Wycombe.

David Davies profile

©Published by Independent Newspapers (UK) Limited, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5SL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford. Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01888 840370. Saturday 6 February 1999 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office.



SEAT
12
ROW

Lloyds TSB Five Nations Championship
England v Scotland
Saturday 20 February 1999



Lloyds TSB
Your life. Your bank.

Lloyds TSB is a trading name of Lloyds Bank Plc and TSB Bank plc

WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • ARTS & BOOKS • COUNTRY & GARDEN • TRAVEL



**DEA BIRKETT
JOINS
THE CIRCUS**

FEATURES, PAGE 8

**THE TROUBLE
WITH
ERICA JONG**

BOOKS, PAGE 15

**THE TOP 10
PLANTS
IN PERIL**

GARDEN, PAGE 17



**YAM, BAM:
A GOURMET
IN JAMAICA**

TRAVEL, PAGE 19



The long goodbye

Simon Dee was once the biggest star on British TV – a Sixties Chris Evans with style. Then things began to slide. MI5 tapped his phone. A cartel of Swiss bankers stole his designs for the Millennium Dome. And as for David Frost...

Boris Yeltsin's grandson and TV's Philippa Forrester are Winchester's only famous residents, according to a local taxi driver called Dave. "I ain't never heard of him," says Dave. In media circles, people had been only slightly more clued up when I told them I was going to Winchester to meet Simon Dee. "God, I thought he was dead," said one. "Didn't he emigrate to New Zealand, or was that the Galloping Gourmet?" said another. "Ah," said a third. "Simon Dee, the locus classicus of the where-are-they-now? feature." When I reported this exchange, my wife was terribly impressed with the term *locus classicus*. "You must drop that into your article," she said. "But make sure you use it in the right context. Don't say that Simon Dee pulled up in his Locus Classicus."

Far from it, as it turns out. Simon Dee is skint. Worse, he is skint and unknown. Imagine if, in 2029, Chris Evans is found living anonymously in a small terraced house in deepest Hampshire. It would represent much the same 30-year fall down the rickety ladder of fortune. For, in 1969, tall, toothy Simon Dee, host of the BBC's hit chat-and-music show *Dee Time*, was as big a star as there was on television.

We meet at Winchester's posh Hotel du Vin. He is still tall and toothy and, physically at least, the years have treated him fairly charitably. Later this year he will be 64. "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?" Lennon and McCartney's words have acquired a poignant ring for a fellow golden boy of the Sixties.

Until 1964 he was called Nicholas Henry-Dodd. He was from a well-to-do Lancashire family and went to Shrewsbury School at around the same time as Michael Heseltine and Richard Ingram. John Peel was there a little later and, of the broadcasters whose careers not only survived the 'Sixties but continued to thrive, Peel is one of the few for whom Dee admits a grudging admiration.

His own rise to fame began with Radio Caroline, the pirate radio station set up off the coast of Ireland on a retired Baltic ferry. Radio

Caroline's founder was an ebullient Irishman, Ronan O'Rahilly, whose first recruit was his old drama school pal Henry-Dodd. But Henry-Dodd was no name for a pirate. So he combined his young son's name with the initial letter of Dodd to become Simon Dee.

In the Hotel du Vin – between mock-humble protestations that "it's all so very, very long ago" – Dee enthusiastically recalls the troubled launch of Radio Caroline. "We had to test the signal before we left the anchorage, so we played Ray Charles singing 'Round Midnight' as a test signal. All seemed to be well, but unknown to us we hadn't quite organised the signals correctly, and on every radio and TV set within a 50-mile radius, Ray Charles suddenly interrupted the main evening news. In Dublin, everyone was crying 'My God, what's going on?' and no wonder, because Ray Charles on a Hammond organ was saturating the news."

Dee roars with laughter. He is very hail-fellow-

BY BRIAN VINER

well-met, joshing loudly with the waitress and later rumbustiously denying her request not to smoke a cigar at the table. But for all the bluster, it is hard not to feel sorry for him. In 1970, following a falling-out with his then-employers London Weekend Television, he took a sabbatical. "I thought, 'I'll have a rest now and take a year off'. It became two years off, then five years, then 10 years, then 20 years, then 30 years off."

Again, he roars with laughter. But not, I reckon, because he thinks it's funny. A few weeks ago, Dee wrote to Mike Leggo, BBC TV's head of light entertainment, listing all the guests he interviewed between 1967 and 1970, and suggesting that he meet them again to ask them "if their dreams came true". He would, of course, need a medium to make contact with many of them. But he sees no reason why he shouldn't make a comeback. "After all, if a racing driver stops racing for 20 or 30 years, then gets back in the car, he will soon get it together. The control and co-ordination will still be there," Mike Leggo evidently does not agree. He has not replied.

But let us again wind back the years to Dee's strange sacking from Radio Caroline. "We finally anchored off the coast of Suffolk," he recalls. "One day I was doing *Sunday Favourites* when the technician on the other side of the glass collapsed. I found him on the floor, dying. I went to the microphone and asked for someone to send a boat. Within an hour there must have been 20 rowing boats, yachts, catamarans, and the local lifeboat. The captain later called me to the bridge and said, 'By calling for assistance, you have murdered him. Get off my ship'."

Dee was promptly hired by BBC Radio, but owed his big television break to the mother of Bill Cotton, one of the most illustrious of Leggo's predecessors as head of BBC light entertainment. As Dee tells it, Mrs Cotton – wife of the band leader Billy – saw him on the box advertising Smiths Crisps, liked what she saw, and recommended him to her son. Surprisingly, Bill Cotton confirms this.

"I think my initial reaction was 'you do the cooking, let me spot the talent'. But on the way home I realised that my mother had seen more performers than I had, and that I ought to take her seriously. So we started *Dee Time*. He was quite difficult in that first year because it went to his head. But by the second year there's no doubt that he was one of the most powerful people on television. He had great influence on the young."

This influence was channelled partly through the Dee Code, a 1968 version of the Ten Commandments. Youngsters were asked to write in endorsing the Dee Code and, in return, were sent a weekly letter signed by Dee, which amounted to a lecture in moral rectitude.

Today, those letters make arresting reading. On the subject of race relations, for instance, one said: "An intelligent being from outer space might easily decide that the only species of mankind worth preserving was the one with the dark brown skin, the lustrous eyes, sculpted lips and natural grace in movement, and that all those other pallid, thin-lipped, pale-eyed, lank-haired creatures should be painlessly annihilated before they reduced the physical beauty of humanity any further. Think about this, especially when next you hear someone make disparaging remarks about our coloured fellow-citizens."

These were worthy enough sentiments, yet not everyone approved of the Dee Code. In the *Daily Mail*, Dee was criticised for "getting too big for his with-it boots". But still his career seemed glided, especially when *Dee Time* replaced the ailing *Juke Box Jury* in the all-important Saturday early evening slot. For Dee, life got better and better. He drove an Aston Martin. At a glitzy party, he danced with Princess Margaret. And no star – not John Lennon, nor Charlton Heston, nor Michael Caine – was too big to appear on his show. Thanks to Caine, he even landed a part in *The Italian Job*. "Mike had been on the show and thought he'd do me a favour: I played a poofy Savile Row tailor, and I was so good that poofs started chasing me." This time he laughs so hard that a couple two tables away joins in.

In 1970, Dee was poached by LWT, reportedly

Continued on page 2



Simon Dee in his Sixties pomp; and at home in Winchester today (top)

INSIDE

Letters 2
Leaders and comment 3-7
Features 8-9
Obituaries 10-11

Arts 12-13
Books 14-16
Country & Garden 17-18
Travel 19-27

Voice Personals 28
Miscellany 29
Radio 31
Today's TV 32

NINE PAGES OF
TRAVEL

**MUST
END SOON**

**THE EVEREST
JANUARY SALE**

30%* off

Do you need a warmer, quieter, more secure home?

Buy Everest windows and doors in January and claim 30%* off.

Call free **0800 010123**
www.everest.co.uk

Everest
FIT THE BEST

FEB99

TOMORROW IN
THE INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

CULTURE

Going home: the
final work by the
late Brian Moore

REAL LIFE

What happens when a
Hollywood career turns
sour? Suzanna Leigh
tells the truthNo more cover girls:
is this the end of the
supermodel?

REVIEW

How the Lonely Planet
put an end to lonely travelPLUS
Jeremy Paxman's diary

Independent Eye No 6: Fear in Sarajevo at the sound of a sniper's shot, 1993. From 'An Independent Eye: A Century of Photographs' (Sutton, £20)

Tom Pilsen

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2050 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk (e-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address). Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Insult to teachers

Sir: I was seriously considering a teaching career until now.

I am a 28-year-old arts graduate with two degrees. For the past five years I have taught English as a foreign language in private language schools. This experience with primary school children made me think about returning to England and contributing to the education of British children.

I had thought that my 11 O-levels, including maths, physics and chemistry, would be more than adequate for placement on a post-graduate certificate of education course. I had of course expected some training in education, child psychology, teaching methods and so on. I was also quite prepared for a loss of status and lower wages. However, I do not intend to sit remedial maths exams, or to pore through A-level maths books ("All teachers must take maths test", 4 February). Mr Blunkett's latest plans are an insult to my intelligence and training.

No, Mr Blunkett, I will not be returning to England to become a primary school teacher. However, there are a few thousand unemployed maths teachers here in Greece. Do you think that if I teach them adequate English they could come and fill the gap? Perhaps, they could contribute to the foreign language skills of schoolchildren, too! MARINA ROBB Athens

Sir: It is of little surprise that most teachers could not explain the origin of the words "chortle" and "dosh". ("All teachers must take maths test", 4 February). To know that Lewis Carroll invented the former and that the origin of the latter is unknown would demonstrate at best a breadth of general knowledge, not competence in the teaching of grammar. However, should better trained teachers therefore receive more dosh, then, all I am sure, would chortle. IAN MAGGS Heatham, Northumberland

Marriage rethink

Sir: All peoples, not only Judeo-Christians, have believed that marriage has a sacred character. ("There should be nothing holy about matrimony", 30 January). Jo Ind claims Christianity "got it wrong" when the "Church in the 13th century declared it a sacrament".

The Church in east and west always taught in that vein but the western Church actually clarified its meaning, notably in the 13th and 16th centuries.

Consequently, Jo's claim that "it is an institution made by man none the less" gained relatively little credence until modern times. Most of us could agree that "we need to rethink marriage". Unlike Christians, Jo Ind may have in mind something other than the union of one man with one woman for life. Rather than tamper with a gift of God, Christians' rethinking seeks to make marriage work by identifying the obstacles peculiar to each age.

The Churches did not criticise the Birmingham radio station's publicity stunt because it was an arranged marriage. The closest and most loving partnership I have known began as an Irish arranged Catholic marriage in 1933. Like Indian arranged marriages I later encountered, it depended on support from shared beliefs, an extended family and a close-knit community, which the Birmingham couple will not enjoy. HUGH LINDSAY Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

The writer was Roman Catholic Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 1974-1992

Nuclear terrorism

Sir: It appears that the Government is about to undermine much of its early good work on trying to establish a rational and practical policy on the future of the nuclear industry. The announcement on 18 January by John Battle, the Energy Secretary, that plutonium is to be shipped from Sellafield to Japan in the form of MOX (mixed oxide) fuel sits uncomfortably with the Environment Agency's October 1998 report on the Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP).

Our concerns about nuclear proliferation seemed to have been accepted by the Environment Agency in the conclusion that "separated plutonium is generally described as weapons-grade or civil grade. For most practical purposes the grade does not affect the arguments concerning weapons proliferation".

They further state that "it would be a relatively straightforward matter to undertake chemical separation of plutonium from MOX fuel. It is debatable how easy it would then be to assemble the plutonium into a crude nuclear device capable of exploding. However, a terrorist group would arguably be able to

exercise considerable power by merely threatening to explode such a weapon".

Following two periods of public consultation and comment on BNFL's application to commission the SMP and the Environment Agency's report to government, which has not elicited any formal announcement, is it not premature to talk of arrangements for shipping MOX fuel to a country which is undecided about the questionable merits of burning it in conventional reactors?

We urge the Government to declare that it will not permit BNFL's ships to leave Barrow-in-Furness docks. MARTIN FORWOOD Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment PAD GREEN

Friends of the Earth
Cllr MARTIN HEMINGWAY
Nuclear Free Local Authorities
DAVE KNIGHT
Campaign for Nuclear
Disarmament
PAUL LEVENTHAL
Nuclear Control Institute,
Washington DC
PETE ROCHE
Greenpeace UK
MIKE TOWNLEY
Greenpeace International
Penrith, Cumbria

Life in the slow lane

Sir: Mervyn Curran (letter, 3 February) is quite right. We should be changing the culture and making the maximum speed in residential areas 20mph. Unfortunately, we Department of Transport approved driving instructors must get pupils to make "reasonable progress" on driving tests. This is interpreted by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) as meaning that you must drive at least at the current speed limit unless there is a good reason to drive more slowly. Candidates driving at 20mph on all residential streets would certainly fail a test.

Candidates can still pass with some examiners despite exceeding the speed limit by as much as 10mph. Many years ago I asked the then chief examiner, Mr David Norris, if we should all be teaching our pupils to drive at 20mph in residential areas as recommended in the Department of Transport leaflet "Kill Your Speed, Not A Child" which was then displayed at driving test centres. His reply was: "We allow the DoT to display these leaflets but we do not necessarily agree with the content".

Incidentally, one of the main reasons for the new extended test, to

be applied from 4 May, is to include more fast driving. So does the DSA think the main problem with today's drivers is that they are too slow?

DAVID PRESCOTT
Department of Transport approved
driving instructor
Hull

Sir: What a welcome letter is Mervyn Curran's, urging a 20mph urban speed limit. The present 30mph plainly ignores the effects it has had on pedestrians and cyclists.

Moreover, so often it is treated as both maximum and minimum, especially by driving instructors and driving test examiners, who constantly urge their pupils to "make progress", ie not loiter at a safer 20mph but keep up to the 30mph limit.

What chance has a child to walk to or from school? We have denied children the simple right to walk about their own towns. Roll on 20mph asap. J J PUTNAM Totnes, Devon

Worthless verse

Sir: May I add a word of support to the Oxford University Press in their decision to junk their poetry list. I have spent most of my working life in and around poetry and I have noticed that increasingly poets do not feel any sense of worth unless their work is published. It is like a fetish and does not diminish with age. Unfortunately most poems are worthless and to publish them is madness.

Such fragile reputations as OUP's former poets enjoy are mainly due to promotion through their own incestuous groups. Certainly no one else is in the least bit interested in their work, as sales figures show.

The Greek master Cavafy never bothered with publishers. He made lots of copies of his poems, held them together with a paper clip and sent them to his friends. I recommend it. BARRY FANTONI London SW4

Merchants of misery

Sir: You mention the role of arms dealing in fuelling wars in Africa, and the European Union currently has a vital opportunity to clamp down on one aspect of this deadly trade ("Misery engulfs millions as Africa seethes with more wars than ever", 30 January).

The ability of arms brokers in the EU to organise shipments of weapons from third countries to

virtually anywhere in the world has to be curtailed. If the weapons do not touch EU soil, they are not subject to EU export controls.

During its presidency of the EU, the German government is expected to propose that transfers brokered through third countries by EU-based companies are subject to the same restrictions as weapons exported directly from the EU. These proposals should be supported by the UK government, which only tends to control brokering of arms to embargoed destinations and brokered transfers of torture equipment, anti-personnel mines and long-range missiles to other countries.

Welcome as the UK steps are, they ignore the fact that many brokered arms deals involve exports of light weapons - machine guns, rifles and mortars - to countries in conflict regions but not subject to any embargo. With 46 out of the 49 conflicts since 1990 being fought with small arms, such an omission is a crucial mistake. IAN DAVIS Arms Trade Programme, Saferworld London WC1

IN BRIEF

Sir: My dictionary has a different definition to that suggested by one of your correspondents (letter, 5 February):

Huddle, v. i. As the holder of a high-profile job whose utterances are likely to be widely reported, to open mouth without engaging brain and make comments which render that job difficult or impossible to perform.

The Manchester edition of my dictionary also includes this entry under "Anderton, v. i." PHILIP GOLDENBERG Woking, Surrey

Sir: The Government is spectacularly inconsistent over food safety. They are over-cautious in respect of selling beef on the bone and yet at the same time they are giving the go-ahead to measures that enable genetically engineered foodstuffs to enter the food chain. Surely one brush with unnatural practices in respect of foodstuffs might ring a few alarm bells somewhere. Why is the press not giving the Government a much harder time over this issue? SIMON FIELD Broadstone, Dorset

Simon Dee: the long goodbye

Continued from page 1
for the fabulous sum of £100,000 a year. The BBC could not match such a salary, but Cotton wasn't too sorry to see him go.

"It had got to the stage where his ideas of his own importance were actually quite damaging," says Cotton. He thought, as a lot of performers do, that he was bigger than the show. A TV executive has to judge when he has to live with that, and when he doesn't. In his case, I didn't want to. By the way, has he still got those fantasies about M15?"

Yes, in a word. As lunch at the Hotel du Vin wears on, it becomes increasingly and uncomfortably clear that Dee has what

appear to be paranoid delusions. In some ways they are understandable. I don't want to trespass on Anthony Clare territory here, but perhaps they are the only way in which he can make sense of the last 30 years of obscurity, following three years in which he was as famous as anyone in the land.

He is convinced, for instance, that he was drummed off television because he opposed Britain's entry into the Common Market. He thinks that the British secret service, and possibly the CIA too, tapped his phone, worried by his interest in the assassination of President Kennedy. Most bizarrely of all, he embarks on a long tale

which ends with him firmly at the centre of an international conspiracy.

To cut it short, he claims that the Moroccan government commissioned him to design a dome for Casablanca. When he delivered the plans, the Moroccans wouldn't pay up, but a posse of Swiss bankers later took him for dinner at the RAC Club in Pall Mall and said they wanted to build his dome for £100 million.

"I left the RAC Club rather happy. 'My God,' I thought. 'I've found another métier.' I wake up the next morning, phone their hotel and they've gone, without leaving any note at all. It was all some vast sting."

By now I can see where this is leading and, sure enough, Dee is certain that he has been denied the recognition he deserves, not to mention the fee, for conceiving the Millennium Dome.

But let us again return to 1970. The Simon Dee Show on London Weekend was a flop. Ever since, Dee has held on to the notion that it was sabotaged by David Frost, who had a sizeable shareholding in the company.

"He was in New York when I joined, and wasn't very pleased when he found that the biggest rival had signed to his own network." Certainly, the show was given an unsociable slot. And in due course,

Dee's bubble of fame and fortune burst. How, I wonder, does he feel when he sees David Frost on television now? "I don't see David Frost on television now," he says bitterly.

And what has he done for income for the last 30 years? "I have had no income," he says. "When my father died in 1980 I inherited a vast sum of money but it was taken from me by death duties." Financially, Dee depends on his third wife, a teacher, and spends his days looking after their four-year-old son, Cyril George.

"If you have no money," he adds, "you have to concentrate on friendships. It's not such a bad thing. You have to dwell in

reality." Actually, I don't think that Simon Dee dwells anywhere near reality, but in his boots, I'm not sure I would, either.

Gloria Stewart

In an interview with Paul Johnson by Deborah Ross ("Ginger Spice", 2 November 1998), due to a misunderstanding we misquoted Paul Johnson so as wrongly to suggest that he had accused Gloria Stewart of telling lies. We apologise for this error.

THE INDEPENDENT

1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Do not squander King Hussein's legacy of peace

AS THE West pays its respects to the memory of King Hussein of Jordan, it should pause to acknowledge a conundrum. The King has been a good leader, of his own people and of wider Arab interests in the Middle East. Domestically, his achievement was to hold together the country he inherited from his father, despite the loss of the West Bank and the influx of Palestinian refugees. Internationally, his legacy is to have made peace with Israel, and helped broker more realistic positions by his Arab neighbours in the Middle East peace process.

It is to be hoped that the rather Shakespearean deathbed manoeuvres, dashing at the 11th hour his brother's 33-year expectation of inheriting the crown in favour of his eldest son, Abdullah, will come good. Brother Hassan had a high reputation abroad, especially in Israel where his fluent command of Hebrew and friendship with leading politicians meant he was a known and trusted quantity. Son Abdullah, on the other hand, has a reputation merely as a top soldier. It is assumed that he has learnt political skills from watching his father for the past 37 years, but it is not certain. And it is assumed that, as someone educated in Britain, he shares - or at least understands - the values of liberal democracy, and will thus continue King Hussein's pro-Western, pragmatic and peaceful policy.

It is in the values of liberal democracy that the conundrum lies. Western liberal democrats tend to take it as read that, if the Arab countries were democracies, the prospects of peace in the Middle East would be better. But it could be that it was preferable that an enlightened despot should have ruled Jordan for so long. The danger of democracy in a culture dominated by grievance against external enemies is that it could throw up an Islamist demagogue who would want to fight again the wars of 1967 and 1973 against Israel, or fight the holy war against the American-dominated world order.

Equally, though, it could be argued that it is only by moving towards democracy that the rage of Moslem fundamentalism will be channelled into a constructive engagement with the rest of the world. The evidence from other parts of the globe is unclear. India and Pakistan are both democracies, and that has not stopped a series of "hot" wars, or an escalating "cold" war of nuclear weapons competition. Nor have the excesses of Islamic theocracy been noticeably curbed in Pakistan.

The issue of democracy is not raised by the succession in Jordan alone. Power has been effectively handed down in the house of Fahd in Saudi Arabia, while leaders in Egypt and Syria will be replaced in the next few years. Colonel Gaddafi in Libya is not a well man, while even Saddam Hussein must be approaching his rendezvous with mortality. In that context, King Hussein's limited moves towards a constitutional monarchy should be seen as a welcome attempt to secure power based on popular consent. King Abdullah should be given support to broaden his democratic base.

The best hope for advancing the Middle East peace process, though, lies in a different succession battle later this year. If the Israeli elections replace Benjamin Netanyahu with a leader who can unite the forces committed to peace and dialogue with the Palestinians, which are greater than the forces of hostility, then King Hussein's life work stands a chance of being completed.



A mixed review for this angry young man

GORE VIDAL once said that the only people who enjoy themselves in the theatre are the cast. For much of the time, he is right. Which theatre-goer has not looked at his or her watch or wondered why the seats are so uncomfortable in the middle of a supposedly engrossing and emotional performance? It is not a new observation. John Osborne got himself all worked up about the staid politeness of middle-class life in general and the theatre in particular 40 years ago, and tried to shake it up. Not that *Look Back in Anger* would keep everyone from fiddling with their programme notes.

Steven Berkoff revived the angry spirit with his demand that drama should be "in your face" - to similarly mixed reviews. Now Irvine Welsh, famous for the ambiguous heroin chic of *Trainspotting*, has become the latest angry young person to rail against the suffocating politeness and tedium of British theatre.

He certainly succeeded in shocking the bourgeois: one critic described his new play, *You'll Have Had Your Hole*, as "the most obnoxious and contemptible" that he had ever seen. Indeed, his tale of gangsterism, anal rape, torture and drug-taking would not be to everyone's taste. But there is something rather predictable about Mr Welsh's rant against the elitism of modern theatre. It might have made the pulse race faster in Mr Osborne's

day; now it is easier to dismiss such adolescent posturing as mere publicity-seeking.

But what of the substance of Mr Welsh's complaint that, because theatre is a "posher and older" medium than the cinema, most West End plays are "soporific" and most theatres have a "cricket Test ambience designed to keep a younger, hipper crew away"?

It is true that too much of our theatre is self-satisfied, too many bad plays are put on and too many audiences are prepared to put up with it because they think they are being highbrow. And these are faults that all too few people involved in the theatre will recognise. But there are boring films and books as well. Imagine an author going on a talk show to launch a tirade against *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, saying it was silly and pompous and demanding to know who on earth could afford to pay £17.99 for the hardback. He or she would be laughed out of the studio. If you do not like a book, you can stop reading it. If the film is no good, you can go to sleep until it is over or engage in traditional back-row-of-the-movies pastimes. If a rock concert is not as good as the CD you can go and get a drink. But theatre is different. The audience is implicated in the performance. It is trapped. If people are bored, it affects what happens on stage. Whatever a cinema audience does, it does not change what is on the screen.

That is why the audience for a mediocre play feels embarrassed, constrained and annoyed. But that is also why, if a live performance succeeds in "breaking through", it is so much more powerful than a film. The

audience can be swept up in a way that is all the more memorable for not relying on the set changing with every shot, or the special effects, or the fact that the director was able to choose the best of 40 takes. It is precisely the closed-in, inescapable nature of the theatre that makes great drama great.

Sadly, the reality is that there is too much tedious drama staged and, as Mr Welsh says, too little innovation. But to extrapolate from this that "theatre is finished as an art form", a theme that appears in the national press every three months or so, is daft. Because when the theatre is good, it can be sublime. Depending on taste, a good Shakespeare production, a good Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, a good farce, even a good Irvine Welsh play, can stay with you for life in a way nothing else can.

That old chestnut...

JAMES CALLAGHAN, 86, says he does not agree with an age limit of 75 for the new House of Lords. He would say that, wouldn't he? But the old buffer is right. The proposal, which ministers are considering, is an embarrassment for Tony Blair, who just this week vouchsafed his opposition to age discrimination in the pages of *Saga Magazine*. If oldies are allowed to drive provided they pass another test, should not MPs, judges and members of the Upper House be allowed to serve, provided they can name the shadow Home Secretary?

Even the smallest gesture from the IRA could salvage peace

I HEAR the sound of distant drums. They are beating in the future - about two months away to be precise. The drums to which I refer are those of Ulster's marching season, the summer months of unrest and irrationality. If the Ulster peace process were working as it should, then there would be less reason than usual to fear the advent of the marching season at Easter. There would be a power-sharing executive of unionists and nationalists sitting in Stormont with shared responsibility for the policing of demonstrations.

Mr David Trimble and Mr Seamus Mallon would be sitting down with the leaders of Sinn Féin and loyalist groups to smooth a path through the dangerous summer months.

But what we have now is an agreement without the apparent will to make it work. Instead the punishment squads - fascists by any other name - batter and brutalise, the IRA and loyalist paramilitaries sit on their arsenals and dissident republicans plot a renewed campaign of terror.

Mo Mowlam's uncharacteristically gloomy expression on television this week was an indication of the precarious state of the process. Be assured that we are in serious trouble. The central assumption of the peace process - that common sense will ultimately prevail - looks less tenable than at any time since the Drumcree stand-off last July.

Consider the largely unreported clashes that have occurred around the Garvaghy Road area in the past week or so. Sectarian tension is high in Portadown, and the Drumcree stand-off is again building towards a confrontation. Hardline loyalists, who have long wished for the collapse of the

agreement, see in the latest crisis over decommissioning the chance to drag the Ulster Unionists out of the process. They will again use Drumcree as a focal point of their anger.

That protest collapsed last year only because of the tragic deaths of three young Catholic boys. Had that tragedy not happened the police and Army would have faced an unprecedented confrontation with loyalist protesters. That in turn would almost certainly have ruined Mr Trimble's chances of persuading the doubters in his own party to stick with the process. As Drumcree looms once again, Mr Trimble needs all the help he can get. What he wants is to see a start to the decommissioning process.

The question is whether those whom he needs to help him, principally Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, are either willing or able to deliver. I believe Mr Adams has travelled a long distance to his present position. He has made a journey that has involved the abandonment of armed struggle and the acceptance - so long unthinkable for republicans - of a political settlement within a United Kingdom.

The notion that he would bring his movement that far and then abandon the process for the sake of guns does not tally with what he knows of his pragmatic political approach. It has been suggested that Mr Adams could make an historic compromise and follow the route of another republican leader, Eamon de Valera, who in 1927 agreed to take an oath of allegiance to the King in order to enter the Dáil of the new Irish Free State.

But there is a critical historical difference in the circumstances in which both men have operated. When de Valera agreed to take the oath he did



FERGAL KEANE
The peace process is likely to break down unless the republicans compromise on weapons decommissioning

so as the leader of a movement that had suffered a resounding military defeat four years before, in the Irish Civil War. The backwash of defeat enabled de Valera to make his historic U-turn. Militarism as a principle had been discredited. Even then, some of de Valera's supporters were said to have attended the Dáil with guns secreted on their persons. The issue for today's IRA is that, unlike its forebears in the Irish civil war, it has not been defeated and thus should not be expected to "surrender" its weapons. One of the essential building-blocks of the current settlement is the promise that nobody has been defeated.

Decommissioning of weapons is wrongly seen by republicans as an implicit acceptance of military defeat. And yet that is what the agreement which Sinn Féin (and by implication the IRA) supported now demands. But let us stay with de Valera for a moment. "Deey" was an exceptionally shrewd political operator. While he lacked the passion and charisma of Michael

Collins, he was by far the more wily politician. That is why Dev survived the murderous trauma of the civil war years and Collins did not. Mr Adams knows there are many republican dissidents who would happily send him the way of Collins. And he may feel that he has pulled republicans as far as he can along the road to compromise with Mr Trimble. His concern now is probably as much with keeping the mainstream republican movement together as it is with advancing the peace process.

The brutal attempts of the IRA to keep the dissidents in line - witness the beating of Paddy Fox last week - are the most public sign we have of the battle within republicanism. Now that the Real IRA and Continuity IRA are building up weapons supplies and apparently planning terrorist attacks in Britain, the possibility of a fratricidal feud with the Provisional IRA becomes a serious possibility.

Can the Provos afford a well-armed and militarily aggressive organisation claiming the mantle of the Irish Republican Army? If it did come to a fight the Provos would win, but the cost in terms of lives and political progress could be huge.

For one thing the eruption of a shooting war would force the Government to suspend Sinn Féin's involvement in the peace process - the argument that the IRA was fighting to destroy a dissident threat to the process would be given short shrift.

A bloody feud similar to those we have seen in the past would be one breach of the Mitchell Principles too far. And how sure could we be that the Provisionals and Sinn Féin would be led by the same people who have steered the republican movement

successfully through the past few dangerous years?

I believe David Trimble and Gerry Adams are both brave men. They are creatures of different cultures and traditions thrown together by the demands of peace.

The question now should be how they can help each other. I believe those around Mr Trimble when they say that any compromise on decommissioning by the Ulster Unionist leader would lead to his political demise. That is a fact not political spin. But I also accept that Mr Adams is not in a position to deliver the wholesale decommissioning of IRA weapons. What then is the half-way house that gets both men off the hook and allows this process to move forward?

There must be a symbolic gesture towards decommissioning from the IRA. How they do it, where they do it, what weapons are involved, is a matter they can resolve with the decommissioning body.

I don't believe there will be a large-scale destruction of guns - not while the threat from dissidents and loyalist paramilitaries remains, not while the peace process remains in such a precarious state. But it is not too much to ask that the IRA signals its commitment to the peace process by offering a gesture to the embattled Mr Trimble. It is then up to Mr Trimble to accept that gesture and convince his supporters.

Things are bad, but there is still time and there is still a choice. The IRA must make its choice now: a crucial gesture towards peace or a summer and more of agony.

The writer is a BBC News special correspondent

Kosova children appeal to Independent readers

Kosovar children refugees in Albania face cold, hunger and disease as winter deepens. Many are in deep shock, having witnessed their parents and relatives killed in the awful atrocities from which they fled. Albania, the poorest country in Europe, has few resources to support the massive influx of refugees.



Your action will help children who have lost everything

The European Children's Trust needs your swift response to set up an emergency centre in Shkoder, northern Albania, to help 2500 refugees. Our centre will provide basic necessities and schooling to give security to the confused and frightened refugee children living in Shkoder.

These are children and families whose homes have been lost, perhaps forever. Special help is needed for the traumatised children who have witnessed terrible crimes, and must now start to live a normal life.

• £30 could buy emergency medicine and food supplements for 5 Kosovar refugee children for a week.

Kosovo Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KEX394, 640 Queen Street, London, EC4B 4AR.

Please send what you can to save the displaced Kosovar children this winter. Call 0800 056 3686 now or cut the coupon below

I enclose £30 my choice £ to save Kosovar children. (Cheques to The European Children's Trust please.) Or debit my Access/Visa/CARD card:

Card no. _____ Expiry date _____ Signature _____ Date _____ Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

Telephone no. _____ Please return to: Tanya Barron, (NWA), Kosovo Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KEX394, 640 Queen Street, London, EC4B 4AR.

Or call 0800 056 3686 NOW. The writer is a BBC News special correspondent

Please act NOW - your gift will give hope

Biff! Kerpow! Splat! There goes another warlord

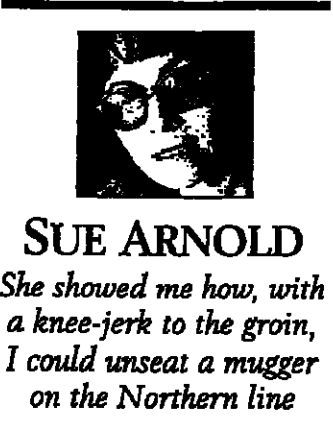
HAS YOUR local swimming-pool turned into a sports and leisure centre yet? Ours has. I know this because above the door where there used to be a modest sign saying "Entrance to pool" and an arrow, there is now a huge blue, white and gold billboard covering half the wall with SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE in 2-ft-high letters surrounded by fluorescent go-faster stripes. It's certainly impressive. People walking past stop and gaze at it in wonder, as well they might because, apart from the sign, nothing else has changed.

The lino in the passage is still scuffed. The ladies' changing-room has the same mottled concrete floor sloping towards the centre, and the 2-in puddle of brackish water that inevitably collects in this depression still offers excellent

hydroponic opportunities for the cultivation of old tissues, verruca plasters, toenails and hair.

I lied. There have been changes. Outside the gents' changing-room, in place of the scales that gave your weight in stones, pounds and ounces, there is now a vast, chrome vending-machine offering 50 varieties of health drink and, beside it, a glass cabinet displaying super-support sports bras. This must be the leisure section.

Last time I went for a swim the receptionist asked if I wanted the special half-price membership to the gym, available in February only. What gym? "Kadisha", called the receptionist. "Would you show the lady our new facilities?" A superbly supported girl in trainers emerged from a back room and took me upstairs. "Isn't this where



SUE ARNOLD
She showed me how, with a knee-jerk to the groin, I could unseat a mugger on the Northern line

the spectators' gallery is?" I asked, remembering noisy swimming-gala evenings. "I didn't think there was anything else up here apart from a couple of broom cupboards."

You'd be amazed how much fitness equipment you can squeeze into two broom cupboards, or how many sweaty people. If the man on the weighing-machine had had more hair, or indeed any hair at all, it would have brushed the knees of the girl on the exercise bike every time he leaned forward. Kadisha said there were plans to incorporate a multi-purpose exercise studio, but I'd had enough sport for one day and took the membership brochure home to ponder.

"Why don't you get a personal trainer?" advised a well-heeled friend who is currently in the middle of an acrimonious divorce, most of the acrimony arising from her ex-husband's refusal to continue paying for her personal trainer. The mean beast, said Phoebe. "I know they're expensive. But

they're 10 times more effective than going to a gym and work out cheaper because you stop going to gyms because they're so squalid." I thought of the bald man on the weighing-machine. How much is a personal trainer, and what exactly do they do, I asked. How long is a piece of string, said Phoebe.

Next morning, Anne-Marie, tall, lithe, blonde and carrying a sports bag full of weights and boxing gloves, arrived at 7.30 sharp. She specialises in that strain of martial arts known as Tai-Kwon-Do, her aim being not just to make you fit, but fighting fit. Her husband, Winston, is the British Tai kick-boxing champion. I don't suppose their neighbours complain about loud music after 10.30pm.

Between six and seven that morning Anne-Marie had personally

trained a banker in Hampstead who wanted toning and muscle definition. After me she had a couple of housewives who wanted to lose weight and, that evening, she was seeing a barrister who was particularly fond of that Tai-Kwon-Do exercise where you jump, twist and kick. He likes kicking really hard.

I cleared sundry shoes, cereal bowls and items of clothing from the sitting-room floor and Anne-Marie took me through some warm-up exercises. "Great," she said, "you're doing great. Now kick this." She produced what looked like a leather oven-glove and held it at waist height. "Kerpow!" went my bare foot against the glove.

"Mum, where's my packed lunch?" said the youngest. Biff! Kerpow! Splat! I was now doing extended twist-kicks like Bruce Lee

and the lawyer. "Where is his lunch?" asked my husband.

Anne-Marie was explaining how Tai-Kwon-Do was invented by oppressed Korean peasants. There was one particularly impressive aerial kick designed to unseat oppressive warlords from their horses but, unfortunately, she couldn't demonstrate it for me because she had just cracked a rib. Gosh, how? I asked. After a bad coughing fit, said Anne-Marie.

I should like to learn how to unseat an oppressive warlord but, in the meantime, Anne-Marie showed me how, with a graceful knee-jerk to the groin, I could unseat or more likely unman a mugger on the Northern Line.

Toning, muscle definition, self-defence. It's a snip. Go for it, Phoebe. Why settle for less?

THE SATURDAY PROFILE

DAVID DAVIES, ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE FA

The presentable face of football

THE PRESS conference was turning nasty and Bobby Robson, the England football manager, did not like the way the questions were going. Finally he snapped, got up from his chair, stepped off the dais, and opened a side door. Several brooms fell out. Robson, flustered, strode through the media to the door at the far end of the hall. Then he strode back; he had left his mackintosh on the chair. Muffled sniggers were heard. This is how the Football Association used to work.

On Tuesday there was another press conference, called to announce the dismissal of Glenn Hoddle, one of Robson's successors. Seconds into it, with David Davies, the FA's director of public affairs and acting chief executive, reading a prepared statement, a man burst into the room screaming obscenities. As he was wrestled to the ground by security men and surrounded by press photographers, Davies quietly waited. Then, after a light-hearted reference to being interrupted for a "commercial break", he calmly read the statement again.

This is how the FA works today. This is why Davies, the FA's press officer, managed to emerge from a week in which his chief client was pilloried, ridiculed and sacked, with his own image enhanced. Acute political antennae, a smooth presentational manner, hard work and ruthlessness ensured that Hoddle's departure was not accompanied by that of his messenger.

Davies is football's spin doctor; it's Alastair Campbell. But he is also its Peter Mandelson, seeking to direct policy as well as disseminate it.

In his dramatic rise from reporting on football to running it, he, too, has made enemies; but, unlike Tony Blair's fallen favourite, he is yet to overreach himself. He even survived his collusion with Hoddle in the notorious World Cup diary, which betrayed dressing-room confidences.

Davies has now become, in the words of one leading commentator, "arguably the most powerful administrator in the English game". At a time when football, once confined to factory floor and public bar, even pervades the Cabinet, that is an influential position, one underlined by regular contact between Davies and Campbell.

Such a link should come as no surprise, given Davies's background. Politics is in the family; his grandfather was mayor of St Pancras and his father would have contested the 1950 election but for his early death. They were Tories, but other family members had socialist allegiances and it was that example which Davies followed when he became involved in student politics at Sheffield University.

Football was also in his blood by then; appropriately, he played left wing for the university. He had been enraptured by the perceived adult glamour of the game as an eight-year-old, when Manchester United fans wearing big, bright red rosettes had visited the family grocer's at Euston Station en route to that year's FA Cup final.

Though he attempts to be impartial he remains a keen United fan. Last Sunday, while working on the Hoddle story, I was on the phone to him when he suddenly sounded distracted. I looked up and saw that on television, Sky were showing United's match-winning goal at Charlton, scored a few seconds earlier.

LIFE STORY

Origins: Born 28 May 1948, in London.
Education: Sheffield University (BA politics); Oxford (Cert Ed).
Media career: Belfast Telegraph (1970); BBC Wales (1971-72); BBC Manchester (1972-83); Political correspondent (1983-86); Education correspondent (1986-89); BBC Midlands (1989-94).
Other jobs: Football Association: Director of Public Affairs (February 1994); Acting chief executive (December 1998).
Family: Welsh father, Irish mother. Scottish wife, Susan, a former Miss Britain. They married in 1977 having become engaged on their first date. Two daughters, Amanda and Caroline.
Nicknames: The Bishop (BBC), Mr Bumble (tabloids).
He says: "I am a football fan first and foremost."
Critics say: "He is upfront without ever coming forward with the kind of friendship that suggests he is totally sincere." (Nigel Clarke, sports writer)



He took his twin passions to Oxford, where he acquired a teaching certificate he has never used, before entering journalism with the *Belfast Telegraph*. That week the Troubles began; timing, as he is fond of saying, is everything.

He swiftly moved on to the BBC, initially in Wales, then Manchester, London and Birmingham. During a varied 23-year career he covered everything: politics, education, crime - even presenting *Songs of Praise*. The experience has been invaluable in his current jobs. His time as a lobby correspondent educated him in the ways of Westminster and brought him important contacts; his interviewing and presenting taught him to handle himself in front of reporters and cameras. All the while he maintained a link with football, covering matches, attending tournaments, seeing for himself the terrible gaffes the FA blundered into.

The FA had a press office, but it was

given little status and staffed accordingly. During Graham Taylor's ill-fated reign one press officer arrived at a media conference with a large alarm clock in an attempt to instil control over its duration. As in most British sporting institutions, the principle was the hopeless one of suppressing news rather than anticipating and managing it.

Davies was approached, with a brief to change this, almost five years ago. His title, "director of public affairs" rather than "press officer", reflected the enhanced role. It has proved to be a more difficult task than he could have imagined. He spent his first 12 months reacting to events as three footballers were accused of match-fixing, another confessed to a drugs, alcohol and gambling addiction, Eric Cantona assaulted a supporter, England fans rioted in Dublin, and there were allegations of "bungs" (illegal financial inducements) involving leading managers.

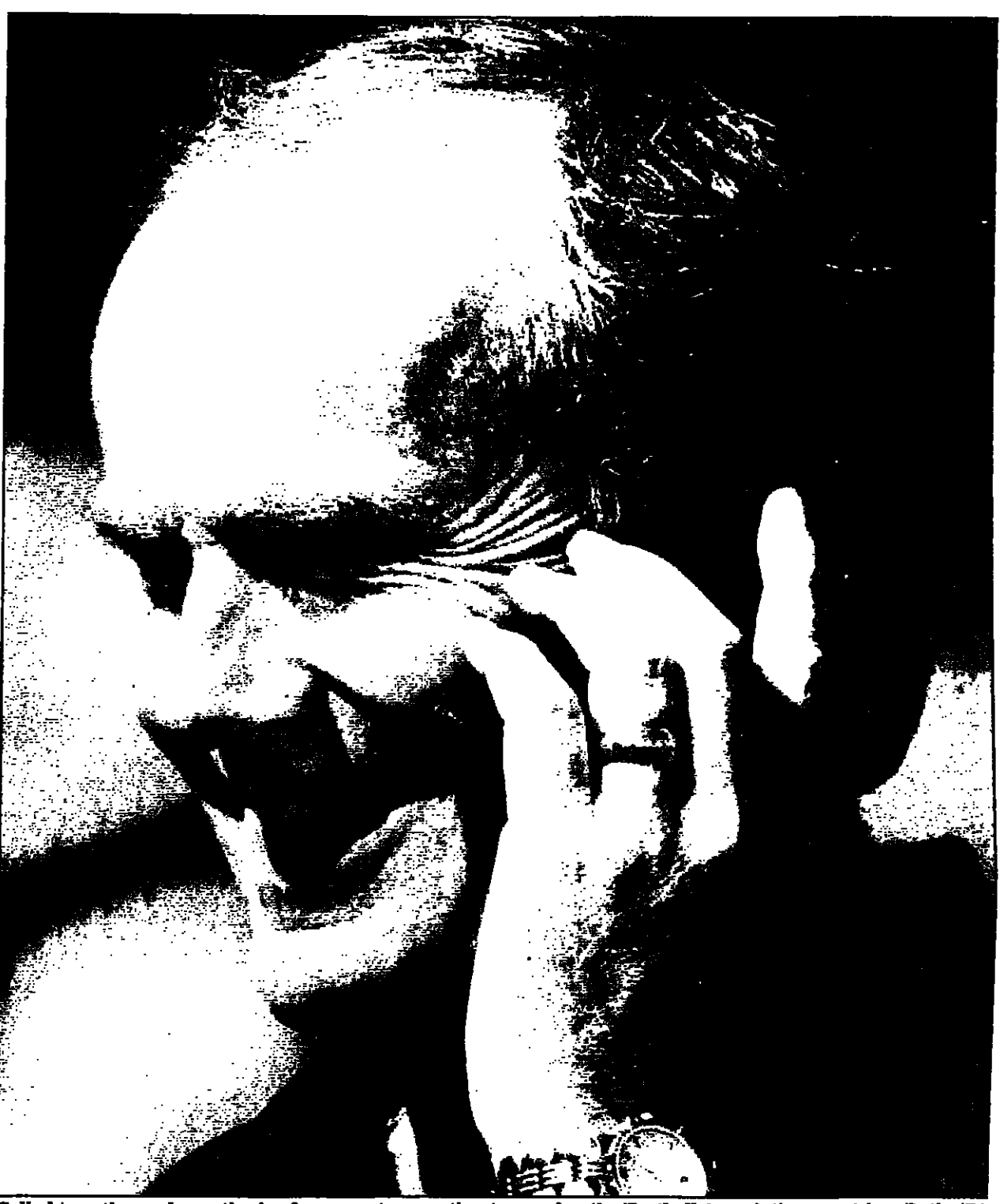
However, as with this week, each crisis gave Davies justification for pushing through changes, often in the face of stern resistance from a hidebound and conservative administration. His creation of a large press department led to accusations of empire-building but, aside from the need to meet the growing demands of the media, this was more a case of building the power base that was required to survive the FA's internal politics.

It has also, his detractors say, enabled him to concentrate on the more glamorous jobs while others do the paperwork. Most notably, Davies presents the televised FA Cup draw and acts as press attaché to the England coach of the day. Given his television experience it would be daft if he were not to undertake the first role; but there is a hint of vanity here, and it almost cost him his job in the summer.

Davies has advised three England managers: Terry Venables, Hoddle, and the caretaker incumbent, Howard Wilkinson. The media was divided by Venables; they either loved or hated him. Hoddle wanted to avoid this and sought to be even-handed. Thus, when he decided to write a book about England's World Cup campaign last summer, as had previous England coaches, he and Davies decided that Davies should "ghost-write" for him.

It was a public relations disaster. Information was released that had been previously denied, and several leading figures in the game, including current internationals, were criticised. Davies's desire to tell a story had got the better of his judgement. He later admitted: "I wanted to be involved, as I had never written a book before - but I won't be doing another in a hurry."

He can also, notes a friend, be "pompos". Two years ago, at a reception in the British Embassy in Rome to promote England's 2006 World Cup bid, Davies told a rambling tale about the guest of honour, the former Manchester United and England footballer Sir Bobby Charlton. It was about an intrepid back-packing student in



Called to action: a dramatic rise from sports reporting to running the Football Association Adam Butler/PA

the Seventies who found himself imprisoned at an Iron Curtain border town for having the wrong papers. The guards freed him after he said the magic words "Bob-bee Charl-ton". Long before the denouement it was obvious that the pay-off would be "and I was that poor student".

But Davies can laugh at himself and happily tells a tale from Euro '96, the football championship England hosted three years ago. One night Davies had retired to bed early, leaving the players celebrating an important victory. He was awoken by a call from reception informing him that a retired colonel living near the hotel had complained about the noise. He went outside, couldn't hear a thing, but told the players - who were not drunk - to keep the noise down, and went back to bed.

He was awoken again to be told that the colonel had complained to the police that two players had been running around naked in the hotel gardens and had been seen by his teenage daughters. The police were downstairs. They said the colonel wanted to press charges. The horrific prospect of this leaking out to the press loomed. Davies was asked to come down to the station to answer questions and to organise an identity parade. Then one of the policemen cracked, and burst out

laughing. The whole affair had been set up by Terry Venables.

The pair formed a warm relationship based on humour. They once planned an April Fool's Day joke that involved faxing all the national newspapers to announce a new press conference policy - "one for journalists with joined-up writing, one for tabloids". To Davies's enduring frustration Venables leaked the tale.

Writing and surviving the World Cup book brought Davies and Hoddle close together but, last week, Davies cut Hoddle adrift as soon as he sensed the way the wind was going. He was also acting chief executive, and his need to protect the FA - and himself - overtook his desire to protect Hoddle. As Hoddle floundered Davies prospered, presenting an unflappable presence to the cameras and a strong hand to the men who will decide, this summer, whether he should be given the chief executive's role permanently.

He has not publicly decided whether to apply. He is unsure about the effect on his family, who still live in Birmingham, though the eldest daughter is now at Oxford. Having lost his father as an infant he values family life, and the stresses of this week and the summer, when the fuss about the book coincided with several close family

members spending time in hospital, has given him pause for thought.

Most observers expect him to take it if the chance arises. Enough of the idealist student remains to see football as a potential force for good and, since his arrival, the FA has become much more active in promoting social causes including that of disabled football. If he fails to be named as chief executive, he may stay in the game as long as football's star remains in the ascendancy. He enjoys the sport and, at present, the profile of the job is as high as anything in government. It is also possible to impact on people's lives more directly.

But should he choose to leave the sport, or be squeezed out, expect him to move into politics. He is ambitious. Is well thought of in government circles and those of the Opposition, and already has much of the politician's manner. While not mendacious, he can stonewall. When the pressure was on this week he turned questions about Hoddle's comments about disabled people into an advertisement for an FA initiative on disabled sport.

Whatever happens to Davies, he is likely to be seen on our television screens for several years to come, and it will not be presenting *Songs of Praise*.
GLENN MOORE

RARELY CAN a project have been as ill-starred as Steve Martin's attempt a few years ago to revive Sergeant Bilko, the TV character made gloriously immortal by the great Phil Silvers. Martin's trouble is that he suffers from what doctors call Robin Williams syndrome, an insatiable need for every character he plays to be a touchy, feely, huggy bundle of love, which wasn't Bilko at all.

The joy of Bilko was that he was essentially disreputable, an army sergeant who would trick the young soldiers in his charge out of their meagre wages and shamelessly flatter his superiors for his own nefarious ends; yet for all that, you could not help liking him.

This was almost entirely due to the performance of Silvers, previ-

ously a successful vaudeville, an occasional movie star, and the composer of Frank Sinatra's hit song "Nancy with the Laughing Face", who in his own words "was predestined to play Bilko".

Not that there was much performing involved. When Silvers was cloistered with the writer Nat Hiken in 1954, and asked to come up with a sitcom for CBS, his genius was to create a character based, according to the journalist Robert Chalmers, in a definitive profile of the actor, "on Silvers's own instincts, notably a fundamental compassion masked by a pathological craving for action".

Phil Silvers was the gambler's gambler, haunted by the voice that tormented Sergeant Bilko. "I hear money," Bilko would tell his men.

ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

26: PHIL SILVERS, ACTOR

"Our money. Crying out into the night, 'Daddy, take us home.' The difference was, as Silvers once lamented, that Bilko had rather better scriptwriters. He used to win the jackpot sometimes.

Silvers, by all accounts, like many in thrall to his particular addiction, got his buzz out of losing. It was a buzz he was rarely short of, but it did not, it will hardly startle you to learn, bring him happiness. The

comic genius's twin constant companions of melancholia and fear of failure blighted Silvers' life to the very end, in 1985.

The actor's mental problems even found their way into Nat Hiken's scripts for Bilko. In one episode, "The Rest Cure", Bilko feigns psychosis and is tormented by tom-toms audible only to himself. In another, he is plunged into a listless decline, having lost the urge to

gamble. "Friend," Bilko tells the motor pool in one of his semi-improvised monologues, "states that when a man has receded from society in his mind, and the frustration is inside him, he will withdraw from the world" - foreshadowing his own story.

But despite his problems, he - Bilko/Silvers - was, according to the evidence, a pussycat, loving of his children and generous to colleagues. And very, very funny. When he visits a medium, he says: "There are no lights on. She must be in."

He could improvise brilliantly. In the episode "The Court Martial", a chimpanzee is accidentally inducted into the motor pool. Bilko is defending the animal at its trial when, to the horror of the cast, the accused

climbs down from the stand and lifts the receiver of a nearby telephone. "Sir, I request an adjournment," says Bilko. "My client is calling for another attorney."

It is difficult to diverge from Chalmers' view that, for its brief life between 1955 and 1959, *The Phil Silvers Show* achieved a level of sustained inspiration that has never been bettered in television comedy.

In an era when the tradition in American sitcom was for the male lead to be played by some nondescript Dick in a button-down shirt - Dick York in *Benched*, Dick Van Dyke in anything - Silvers's self-destructive decision to put so much of himself into prime time had more than a whiff of the gambler's foolhardy heroism about it.



THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



A chunk of Beachy Head falls down,
The cliffs of Dover stop being white:
The teeth of England's southern coast
Are rotting quietly overnight
And disappointment will be rife
Among the tourists coming in.
Dispatch a flock of pigeons now,
And spare the heart of Vera Lynn.

It's curtains for the ruddy duck,
A waterfowl which likes to breed
With other species - so much so
That Michael Meacher feels the need
To wipe the sandy creatures out.
A move that's almost guaranteed
To cause another rural row
Among the meres and river-weed
When twitchers in their anoraks,
Who hate these bronze *Anatidae*,
Lock horns with liberationists
On river banks each Saturday.

The "crisis of our Englishness" ...
A blunt new survey rates us
As a dull and vulgar people
Whose Celtic neighbours hate us.
The Scots, the Welsh, the Irish
Make cultural advances
While all we have are hooligans,
Hugh Grant and morris dances.
Now may I say in our defence
True Englishness is subtler
And hidden deep within us
Like the passion of a butler
For the mistress in her mansion,
So it's rare that we reveal it.
But because you cannot see it
Doesn't mean we do not feel it.

Hoddle! Just the sound of it
Deserves a definition.
Hoddled by the tabloids,
Then deprived of your position.
Hoddle - used of journalists,
A good collective noun
For a pack of baying toerags
Waiting months to do you down.

New clone control is on its way,
The Government has told us so.
But even if it's put in force,
If clones escape, how do we know?
Besides, my clone will be of use
To write my stanzas if I die.
And since he's worked with me I find
I like the bloke... and so do I.

THE WEASEL

On discovering that decadence is the new grey and Charles I was the shortest English monarch, I celebrate with an Alaskan red

AS OFTEN seems to be the case, we find ourselves in a quandary about re-decorating Weasel Villas. We'd pumped for art gallery white in the dining room, but then Mrs W read somewhere that grey is all the rage this year. Unfortunately the walls are already painted grey. Alternatively, we could take the plunge for something a bit bolder. Something historical perhaps, redolent of a time celebrated for artistic creativity but notorious for sexual experiment, a discordant, neurotic era teetering on the brink of totalitarianism. If this seems all a long way from slapping on the Dulux, you could be right, but it is what is being advocated in the pages of the current issue of *The World of Interiors*, which devotes 10 pages to the "Weimar Palette".

As far as I'm aware, it is the first time that an article on decoration has been inspired by an unstable German republic (1919-1933). The magazine suggests that we should draw "the decadent styles of Twenties Berlin into the new, naughty Nineties". In case you're wondering how to adopt the fashionable Weimar look, the photo spreads include: a gaunt young man holding a carnation; a pair of elderly bachelors in a bath-tub; a large lady in a red dress posing before a length of red fabric (a snip at £345 per metre); and an octopus in a "uranium glass vase" (£1,000).

It looks just the ticket for Weasel Villas (particularly the octopus). Mind you, to get the full flavour of Weimar edginess, we'll probably need to invest in one or two accessories. Getting six

million unemployed into Weasel Villas may be a bit ambitious, but it should not be too hard to get Mrs W to plaster down her hair and wear a monocle. Eventually, I can see us both drinking schnapps and bellowing an off-key Kurt Weill number: "Show me the way to the next whisky bar..." All very jolly. The only slight complication with such a daring makeover is: what comes after Weimar?

IS THERE no limit to Rupert Murdoch's hypocritical prudery? The shame-faced hacks of the Murdoch empire are obliged to insert a generous helping of asterisks when using even moderately rude words. A classic example occurred in last week's *Sunday Times* Book Section, where Harvey Forlock's survey of book reviews quoted Will Self's view that "to a writer, literary biography is flat-out porn. W*k material".

Somehow, I find it unlikely that the acid-tongued Mr Self, who was writing in the *New Statesman*, incorporated this brace of stars in his original copy. Yet, in order to avert a fit of the vapours in the maiden aunts who read the *Sunday Times*, the offending epithet was ruthlessly emasculated. It is, of course, a pretty obvious irony that "W*k material" features on a daily basis in the *Sunday Times* sister paper, *The Sun*.

It is just as well that the publishers of Jonathan Green's acclaimed *Dictionary of Slang* (Cassell, £25) do not take a Murdochian line with scatology.

Otherwise, this 1,300-page tome, which provides 797 alternatives for masturbation, would contain whole galaxies of asterisks. Personally, I'm drawn to Mr Green's more genteel inclusions, such as "Cor! Chase me round the gasworks!" (defined as "general excl. of astonishment"). But it turns out that even such Bunteresque expressions as "Criley!", "Cripes!", and "Crumbis!"



are euphemisms for "Christ!". To spare the blushes of delicate souls, they will doubtless appear as C***ey!, C***es! and C***us! in Rupert's rags.

IT TURNS out that the small display in the Banqueting House, which I mentioned last week, is not the sole event that commemorates the execution of Charles I. A much larger exhibition devoted to the unfortunate sovereign

has opened in the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. With unexpected black humour, the title of the show is *The King's Head. Treasures on show range from van Dyck's stunning triple portrait of the melancholy monarch to a post-mortem miniature said to be embroidered with the king's own hair. I had to go after reading a review by John Russell Taylor, intrigued in particular by his assertion that "Charles I was the shortest English monarch (while his son Charles II was, oddly, the tallest)".*

This was puzzling because I read somewhere that Edward I aka "Longshanks", the black-hearted villain of *Braveheart* (this, boo!), was the tallest royal. My researches revealed that Charles II's reputation as a giant stems from a "wanted" poster during the Civil War, which described him as "a tall, dark man above two yards high". However, there are one or two bits of evidence which suggest we should knock a few inches off this estimate. According to one reference work, the Merry Monarch "rode several winners at Newmarket". When did you last see a jockey who topped off? A more substantial indication of his true stature appears in a 1661 portrait by John Michael Wright, which portrays the king wearing a pair of rather tarty doekin boots with approximately three-inch heels.

The shortness of his dad is less in question - not that you would guess he was a half-pint from the noble portraits currently on display in Buck House. (An instructive parallel may be drawn

with images of the less-than-lowering House of Windsor. Though one of the works is titled *The High and Mighty Monarch Charles*, the exhibition catalogue reveals that he was "no more than 5ft 4in". Still, this doesn't necessarily make him the shortest English monarch. I shouldn't have thought that Queen Victoria or, indeed, the present incumbent would have to bend too much to negotiate a lintel at that height. Of course, it should be borne in mind that Charles I's dimensions changed following his appointment with the axeman on 30 January 1649. After that, his claim to the title of shortest monarch is incontestable.

I SOMEHOW found time in my crowded schedule to see my old pals at the Old Royal Observatory for a sampling of its Greenwich Meridian 2000 range of wines and spirits, soon appearing at a supermarket near you. Though the two dozen wines were initially intended to represent each of the international time-zones, this proved a little tricky. The only land mass on zone 10, for example, is a chunk of Greenland, scarcely renowned for the fineness of its vintages, while zone 2 is Alaska.

By my estimation, the Greenwich grog covers only seven time-zones, but it has the compensation of being eminently quaffable (particularly the Scotch). It is, however, to be hoped that our official clock-watchers don't get too much of a taste for the official millenium hooch. After 75 years, the time signal wouldn't sound the same as: Pip, pip, pip, pip, hick!

SPIRIT OF THE AGE

PAUL VALLELY

Take the third way to nirvana

THE SPECTRAL figures moved noiselessly through the darkness into the elegant Georgian drawing-room. It was just before daybreak as they settled, cross-legged or kneeling, on their cushions and mats, drawing blankets and shawls around their shoulders, for their long meditation. The smell of the wick of a single lighted candle drifted through the air as the breathing settled and the rosy streak of the new dawn slowly lit the room.

This was Sharpham College for Buddhist Studies and Contemporary Enquiry, which has its home in a Palladian mansion on the banks of the river Dart in Devon. Its director spent seven years as a Tibetan Buddhist monk and three more in a Korean Zen monastery, but he is an Englishman, Stephen Batchelor, a scholar in classical Tibetan, Sanskrit and Pali.

In Britain today there are several traditional Buddhist monasteries, which seek to create islands of Eastern orthodoxy in a sea of Western secularism. But Sharpham is different. It looks for a middle way between the dogmatism found in the ancient Asian traditions and the rational objectivity of Western scepticism. It offers a Buddhism without beliefs - just the kind of thing that Glenn Hoddle might have found handy this week when he blundered into the oriental minefield which is the doctrine of karma.

Batchelor's great project, which has caused a major stir among mainstream Buddhists across the world, has

been to separate the techniques of the Buddha from the metaphysics of the Hindu culture into which the Buddha was born - aspects of which, despite his radicalism in other areas, he simply accepted. "The Buddha offered a method," says Batchelor, who is an expert in the Zen, Tibetan and Theravada traditions. "But he took Hindu cosmology for granted - the assumption that the earth is flat; the idea of *samsara*, the endless cycle of birth and death." Batchelor's insistence is that you don't have to accept Asian cultural norms to benefit from Buddhism which, quintessentially, is a technique for living rather than a belief system.

The great insight which the Buddha formulated some 500 years before Christ was that all life is unsatisfactory and that the cause of this is craving or desire. Therefore, the cessation of desire will bring about unlimited happiness (nirvana). He then set out an eight-fold path of moral, ethical and spiritual guidelines to achieving this.

This, Batchelor insists, is the real attraction of Buddhism, not the exotic exuberance of the robes, ritual and chanting that lured the great trek of Western youth to the hippie Himalayas. He should know. He was one of them. "That Sixties sub-culture, with its psychotropic drugs, gave people the experience, however elusive, that one doesn't have to inhabit the world of common sense," he says. "But it goes back much further than that."

It goes back to the Enlightenment,

of course, when the Western psyche was rent asunder into the dualism of rationalism and romanticism. By the Sixties, the romantic impulse had declared that materialism, science and progress had - by jettisoning intuition - created a spiritual vacuum. They went East to recapture it.

"That took on the motherlode of that projection; the last place to be mapped, it was seen as the last outpost of spiritual values which had resisted the incursions of the corrupt and degenerate West," says Batchelor, as we stride across the muddy fields of the 500-acre farm in which the college is set. "Tibetan Buddhism acts as a huge magnet for those of such a frame of mind. It has a mesmeric effect - Westerners are mystified and fascinated. But, at a certain point, the tide begins to turn; in the end I realised I was still Stephen Batchelor who was born in Watford, and couldn't live with the split identity."

The result is the stripped-down, remade version he sets out in his international best-seller, *Buddhism Without Beliefs*. It does not reject the central notion of rebirth, so much as redefine it. On life after death, he adopts the agnostic position of saying that we simply don't know. On rebirth, he says the concept does not necessarily imply a continuation of our personality, but only of the force of life in the cycle of nature. The notion of karma - which insists, as Glenn Hoddle knows all too well, that actions have consequences - then becomes a mere



The Buddha sought to end desire and bring enlightenment

statement of fact, rather than of moral culpability. Had Hoddle been able to separate metaphysics from morality so neatly, he might still be the England coach.

Traditionalist Buddhists are indignant at all this. Remove the brick of reincarnation and the moral edifice collapses, they insist. "Batchelor is ready to cast away too much that is integral," says one critic, the Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi, president of the Buddhist Publication Society of Sri Lanka. The result, he says, is simplistic: "The ultimate outcome of such concessions could be a psychologically oriented humanism tinged with Buddhist philosophy and a meditative mood."

That, of course, is its very appeal to many Westerners, as was evident from

the conversations of the students at Sharpham, who were typical of the profile of the modern European Buddhist - independent professionals, aged mainly 30 to 45, who grew up in homes without any religious affiliation.

"It appeals to the modern sense of pragmatism," says Batchelor. "They are not asked to believe, only to do - to sit and watch their breath and see what happens." That may open the door to a world in which they can detect an inkling of something that can't be expressed in words - the mystical, ineffable, subtler, deeper truth that some would call God. Or they may just learn how, in a hectic, driven, compulsive life, just to sit still, walk more slowly and pay more attention to the here and now. "Either way," says Stephen Batchelor.

DAYS LIKE THESE

8 FEBRUARY 1956

JAMES THURBER (pictured), American humorist, writes to *Wolcott Gibbs*

"Dear Wolcott, I'm writing this in my office in *The New Yorker*, through whose corridors, *Time* magazine said 15 years ago, I often walked, an aged gray-eyed respected ghost. The aged and gray are still true, but it's hard to tell around here about respect anymore, or its kindred feelings. (The editor, Harold Ross used to send a note reading, 'Jesus Christ, that was a swell piece.' All you get now, if you insist on finding out what happened to a manuscript, is a telegram saying, 'Piece bought, money deposited'. A month ago they rejected a piece of mine with the highest and warmest and most complete praise I have got since Ross died.

It seems that you should show up around here at least once a year to break the legend... that no one is allowed into your office and that it remains exactly as you left it last time you were



here - the copy of *The New York Times* lying carelessly in a chair, the little clock on the desk stopped, the coffee cup from Schrafft's still partly filled with the coffee of 1953 or whenever it was."

8 FEBRUARY 1586

ROBERT WYNKFIELD describes the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots at Fotheringhay Castle

"Groping for the block, she laid down her head, putting her chin over the block with both her hands, which, holding there still, had been cut off had they not been espied. Then, lying very still upon the block, one of the

executioners holding her slightly with one of his hands, she endured two strokes of the other executioner with an axe, she making very small noise or none at all, and not stirring any part of her from the place where she lay; and so the executioner cut off her head, saving one little gistle, which being cut asunder, he lifted up her head to the view of all the assembly. Then, her dress of lawn falling from off her head, it appeared as grey as one of threescore and ten years old, polled very short, her face in a moment being so much altered from the form she had when she was alive, as few could remember her from her dead face. Her lips stirred up and down for a quarter of an hour after her head was cut off.

Then one of the executioners, pulling off her garters, espied her little dog which was crept under her clothes which could not be gotten forth but by force, yet afterwards would not depart from the dead corpse, but came and lay between her head and her shoulders."

IAN IRVINE

Do computers threaten liberty?

THREE YEARS ago I attended a conference in Edinburgh on data processing, and there was a Soviet professor who began his speech by saying that in the last 25 years there had been three great scientific developments: one was nuclear energy, which at Hiroshima and Nagasaki shocked the world; the second was the discovery of man's capacity to travel in space, which thrilled the world; the third was the discovery and invention of the computer, which went more or less unnoticed, and which was the most important of the three.

I entirely share this view because, when one looks at the future of our society, it is communications technology that provides the central nervous system of all organisations - government, military and industrial. Information is the new man-made raw material upon which all societies in future will live. The creation, the evaluation, the packaging, the transmission and the using of knowledge are going to be the basis for man's life from now on.

What we are discussing at this workshop is man's place in this system, and it is not a technical problem we are discussing but a political one. It does not require technical knowledge in order to understand what is happening and what the problem is.

We are not talking about a Luddite

CLASSIC
PODIUM

From a speech by the former cabinet minister Tony Benn at a workshop on the 'Data Bank Society' organised by the National Council for Civil Liberties (15 NOVEMBER 1970)

answer, but about the regulations and control by law of this enormous power.

Is data collected openly? Is it collected secretly? Is it collected directly or indirectly? We must regulate and control those who are authorised to collect it, to store it, to use it, to transmit it. We must decide to whom they may transmit it and for what purpose, where it is kept, and by

whom and for how long - for ever? How do you protect Sir Alec Douglas-Home from having his name submitted to the yippies as a would-be member, so that all the computers recording this begin to identify him as an undesirable and dangerous figure? Who is responsible at every stage for this information?

If we are talking about the end of privacy, let us end the privacy of those who record the facts about us, and let those who are the librarians of this system have to put their imprint on each bit of information they store, so that later, if it turns out to be inaccurate, we know who put the inaccurate information into the machine.

The doctrine of personal responsibility has to be re-injected into these systems. What rights has the citizen got? Has he the right to know that information about him is being collected, to decline to have it collected, to be told why it's collected, who is collecting it and how long it is to be collected? What damages might be paid to a man for inaccurate information wrongly used? And where do the government and the supervision of government activity come into the picture of defence and protection which we are now considering?

Two final points. The first question I would ask you is whether privacy is actually what we are talking about. I think that the anonymity of modern

urban life is one of the most soul-destroying things that has ever happened to society.

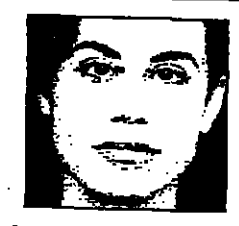
When you have created the totally anonymous society, then you pay for psychiatrists to listen to you, personnel officers to consider human factors, members of Parliament and welfare officers to whom you can write to break through the curtain of anonymity. Do not base this campaign on privacy on the sacred right and duty of everybody to live wholly separate from his fellow men.

Second, make it clear - and this is the political significance of what we are doing - that as a community we recognise the great potential and value of the system that is now at our disposal, and that we do not intend to surrender our power by default to those who have the information that, if abused, could take away our civil rights.

And do not be pessimistic about the capacity of winning this battle. I know that many people in this area get very depressed because no one seems to be interested in it, and yet all of the great changes in our society - the development of the trade unions, the welfare state, the health service, proper education and, now, the war against pollution - have bubbled up from below when sufficient people were concerned about the problem to demand an answer to it.

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

The next generation will be feminists in all but name



NATASHA WALTER

Feminism still has a purpose, while men ignore domestic work and go unpunished for their sexual violence

EVER SINCE Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* more than 200 years ago, people have been arguing that there is no future for feminism, and that argument has gained ground again in recent years.

After all, don't women have everything now that they have ever wanted? Aren't they free to fulfil their individual dreams and desires, at work, at home and in bed, without discrimination, violence or fear? Aren't they even overtaking men in their confidence, bright, happy lives? You keep hearing that the inequality that still exists is just a faint trace of old injustice, and it will soon be washed away without the need for any particular effort on our part. And you hear that whatever inequality still exists is a sign that women are simply choosing still to live different lives to those of men - and why should they be denied that choice?

There is a kernel of truth in this idea that women have come so far and so fast that they don't need feminism any more. Feminism won't have a future in Britain unless feminists come to terms with the way that women's lives really have changed recently for the better.

This generation of young women is beginning to lead lives that are very different from those of their mothers and grandmothers. And this is especially true of educated young women. Girls are surpassing boys at school and university and moving into the professions in ever greater numbers. That educational success often spills into increased confidence and freedom in the way young women live their personal lives. And women have all sorts of bright heroines to look at, whether they are so young that they are dancing along to the Spice Girls, or are looking at Mo'Nique or Kirsty Wark or Madeleine Albright for pointers on how to live in the public eye without fear.

When I edited *On the Move*, a book of essays about the future of feminism which is being published next week, I found that it was the youngest women who were contributing to it who had the most optimistic voices. Take the example of one young British woman of Nigerian extraction, Caroline Abomeli, who is just 15 years old. "My opportunities are much better than my mother's," she says. "My mother was expected to stay at home and do all the housework and prepare to be a wife... that's now changed. I mean, my mum's always telling me that I should get my education, go to university, and then I can start thinking about getting married."

Or take 15-year-old Karen Loughrey, who says: "Whatever I want to do, I know that I can go and do it, regardless of whether I'm male or female." But this optimistic vision of women's lives is not the whole truth, not by a long way. It ignores the dead weight of inequality that still presses upon women, and that will shape even the lives of this generation of young women unless a real effort is made to forge a more equal society.

Feminism still has a purpose today, because feminism cannot cease to exist while women are denied basic economic and political equality, and while men are free to ignore domestic work, and are unpunished when they perpetrate sexual and domestic violence. It cannot cease to exist when, for too many young women, there



Women today have all sorts of heroines to look up to, ranging from the Spice Girls and All Saints to Mo'Nique and Kirsty Wark

are no opportunities before them beyond poverty pay and lonely child-rearing. If you want to know why feminism still has a purpose, forget the rhetoric for a moment, and just look at the facts. Sometimes it's hard to do that - hard and rather unpalatable to stare reality in the face rather than sticking with dreams and fantasies.

For a start, what does the reality of women's power look like? Women have almost no concrete power in, say, the political world, since even with the new intake of all those vividly dressed Labour women, only one in six MPs is a woman. They don't have any power to speak of in the business world either, since only four in a hundred company directors is a woman. Have women really chosen not to share power in Britain? Or have they found that the working culture in the most powerful places in the land still militates against their full participation?

When Caroline Abomeli, that confident 15-year-old, went into the working world, she suddenly became aware of how this inequality might press on her own future. "I want to be a journalist when I am older," she says. "I did some work experience at a national newspaper and there were some women there, but the editors were all older men and I actually felt pretty intimidated by it. I was thinking, 'where are the women?'"

Those who admit that women haven't quite realised the old dream of sharing influence at the top of society often argue that in other jobs they are equal or even overtaking the men. They argue that only middle-class professional women are asking for more equality, and that most women in society are happy with their lot.

But outside the professions, inequality presses even more heavily on women. Women who work as shop assistants and cleaners, as nurses and secretaries, are rarely paid on a level with men doing similarly skilled work. Women take home, on average, just 50 per cent of the weekly wage that a man takes home. The low-paid in Britain are almost all women: 31 per cent of working women are paid less than £4 an hour, but only 11 per cent of working men earn such low wages.

When women have children, they find that the inflexibility of the workplace, and the reluctance of men to take on their share of domestic work, means that they lose out

relative to men: a woman who has children loses, on average, more than 50 per cent of the money she would have made throughout her lifetime if she had not had children, but a man's lifetime wages are not affected by having children.

Do women really choose this heavy burden of economic inequality? Or do they find themselves trapped in a world of low pay and excessive domestic duties because of the outdated attitudes of their partners and their employers?

Those people who admit that working women haven't yet achieved equality will often argue that this inequality is still a pretty comfortable situation for women; that women are released from the responsibility of breadwinning, and allowed a more leisurely approach to their careers. They ignore the fact that for too many women inequality is not just about a lack of promotion, it is about poverty. More women than men live on benefits, both when they are young and when they are old. The vast majority of the 1.5 million single parents in Britain are women, and 70 per cent of them live on benefits, bringing up their children in real poverty. Their children show evidence of poor nutrition, low growth rates and reduced life expectancy compared to their richer peers. Can we bear to see the effects of inequality visited so harshly on these women and their children?

Feminism has not always been good, in recent years, at drawing women of different classes together. Aminatta Forna, a writer in *On the Move*, reminds us that middle-class women shouldn't feel that they have the luxury of giving up on feminism before working-class women have benefited from it; and Livi Michael, a novelist, argues that working-class women have often felt alienated from the old feminism that put more emphasis on women's relationship to their bodies than on their material equality. The view of Forna and Michael, with which I agree, is that women do not have to be identical to one another in order to work together.

Despite all the work that feminism still has to do, many people see little future for it, because they observe that it is no longer a unified movement with one banner, one voice and one demonstration. It is true that the women's movement has fragmented and splintered. But that

doesn't mean that its force has dissipated. Splinters of it are now lodged in the hearts and minds of almost every woman, and man, in Britain.

You can hear feminist ideas from singers, journalists, MPs, activists, actors, lawyers, and women working unpaid at home. Feminism is no longer confined to one group in society. And, because of this, feminists can find themselves more powerful, working in the mainstream with people from all walks of life.

For instance, in their campaigns to ensure that men are brought to justice for sexual violence, the activists at Women Against Rape find that lawyers, MPs and journalists on newspapers including *The Independent* and the *Daily Mail* will take on their ideas for reform. And that can bring success - only six years ago, rape in marriage was made a crime, and in this parliament, measures are being debated to reduce the victimisation in court of women who have experienced rape.

Similarly, in their campaigns for more flexible and family-friendly working practices, the activists at New Ways to Work find that women in unions, and civil servants, are working along the same lines that they are, and - as the Government's new proposals on increased maternity leave and parental leave show - that can create real change. The fact that feminism has now fragmented and entered the mainstream does not mean that it has lost its power, its passion and its drive to change society. Another great change in feminism, one that will gain ground in the coming years, is that men are beginning to see how feminism can spell opportunities for them, as well as losses. Equality in the workplace does not just mean taking power away from men, since it also gives them new choices. It releases fathers from the necessity of being the main breadwinner, and gives them the freedom to participate with the upbringing of their children.

Although men have been slow at changing their behaviour to take on domestic roles, those changes are beginning: young men tell survey-takers that they want to be more involved in parenting than their fathers were, and that they believe that domestic work should be shared between men and women. At the moment, rhetoric still outruns reality, but as the 20th century was characterised by the movement of

women into the workplace, the 21st century will be characterised by the movement of men into the home. Now, feminism can be seen not as a battle between women and men, but as a battle between women and men, but as a movement in which both sexes can join together to move towards equality.

If we can characterise feminism today as an ideology that has been taken up by women and men in all walks of life, we still have to ask: are there real goals for feminism now? I believe that there are, and that they lie in four main areas. First, in achieving equality at work: measures such as the minimum wage, family-friendly working practices, child-care provision and stronger measures for equal pay must be brought in to create more equality between women and men at work. Second, in supporting women in poverty: above all increasing the income of women who are living on benefits with children. Third, in encouraging men in their participation in domestic and family life, a change that requires a push for parental leave from the top, as well as cultural changes from the bottom. And fourth, in protecting women against sexual and domestic violence, by providing more support services, and reforming legal practice so that more violent men are brought to justice.

If feminists aim for these concrete and unmistakable changes, our future will be immeasurably enhanced. It's easy to despair, looking at the obstacles that stand between us and equality. But if you look back over the last 100 years, the changes that have occurred in women's lives seem astounding - from the movement into the workplace, to the revolutions in sexual behaviour and family life.

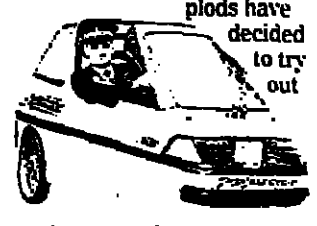
Is it so difficult to imagine that, in another 100 years, if we work to move forward, society will have changed again? It is striking that many young women now are taking on the ideals of feminism, whether or not they call themselves feminists. As 15-year-old Karen Loughrey puts it: "To me, feminism is about finding equality between men and women in all areas of society, from work to family situations. I definitely care about feminism, and I think a lot of people still do."

'On the Move: feminism for a new generation' edited by Natasha Walter, is published by Virago next Thursday, price £9.99

BAROMETER

SEAN O'GRADY

Flying Squad
Can't really see the Sweeney in this. But Devon and Cornwall's plods have decided to try out



this three-wheeler electric Panda car, the City-el (top speed 25 mph). This is not the first of such experiments. In the Sixties, one police force in the Midlands decided to use glass fibre Reliant Regals as pursuit vehicles. The episode resulted in the memorable coinage "plastic pigs". The question is: can you be tough on crime and tough on pollution at the same time?

Groundhog Day
Sad news from Warton, Ontario. Their groundhog day festival was

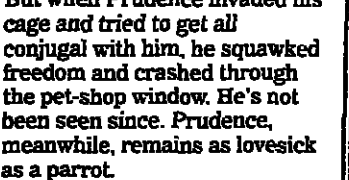
marred by the death, at the age of 22, of their star groundhog, Warton Willie. He was placed in a coffin with his paws crossed, clutching a carrot, before being laid to rest.

Le Roi Soleil
In an elegant speech this week, Paddy Ashdown described the Prime Minister in the following terms:

"We live in the era of the Sun King. The opinion that matters is the opinion of the Sun King." Mr Ashdown knows, perhaps, of what he speaks. Louis XIV, for c'est lui, came to represent absolute power and his long reign (1643-1715) was marked by a curbing of the powers of the traditional nobility. Louis also left France with a legacy of high taxation to pay for his excesses. And there is something baroque about Peter Mandelson. "C'est moi," as Tony might say.

Pretty Polly
Sexual harassment crosses the species barrier: Peter the macaw had been worried about the attentions of a female who shared his home at a pet shop. But when Prudence invaded his cage and tried to get all conjugal with him, he squawked freedom and crashed through the pet-shop window. He's not been seen since. Prudence, meanwhile, remains as lovesick as a parrot.

Image of the week
After 20 years, Playboy casino is reintroducing the bunny girl. New girls will attend Bunny School, learn the Bunny Bible, and live in accommodation called Bunny Hutches. This is Ava Fabian, who clearly has a gradualist approach to the bunny project.



Friday
7.30am start. Spoke to the producer Ann Scott about yesterday's reviews; she was in a good mood. I'm thinking of slipping in to a showing of HK tonight. I like observing reactions incoherent from the general public. It's often more brutal, but always more honest than the glitz and glamour of celebrity premieres.

Interview by JANE BOWERS



MacKinnon: 'So far so good'

Sunday
Arrived back in England late this evening, jet-lagged and flu-ridden.

I have just been to the Sundance Film Festival in Utah - a festival co-founded by Robert Redford which celebrates independent films. I am delighted with the positive response *Hideous Kinky* received there. I was a bit worried about how it would go down with an American audience because the rhythm of the film is deliberately meandering - not fulfilling the fast-paced, action-packed conditions of so many Hollywood blockbusters. Another anxiety was that the hippie aspirations of Kate Winslet's character might not be received with much sympathy by the more puritanical elements of American culture, particularly as Utah is very much Mormon territory. I'm happy to say that all my fears were dispelled - they loved it.

Monday
I got a pleasant surprise today. The editor of my last film, *Regeneration*, called; she said she was on her way to the Canadian Genie awards (the Canadian equivalent of the Oscars) as the film has been nominated for 11 awards - nice to be told! Everyone presumes you already know because you're the director... but not necessarily.

I've been looking at story-boards and illustrations for a new project all afternoon. It's going to be called *The Water Horse* and will be set in my home country - Scotland. Like *HK*, it's going to be low budget and independent. I have tried working on mainstream big-budget films. I once directed a film starring Steve Martin called *A Simple Twist of Fate* and I really felt restricted by the Hollywood studio that was funding it. I think the advantages of artistic

MY WEEK

GILLIES MACKINNON,
DIRECTOR OF 'HIDEOUS KINKY'

and directorial freedom offered by independent films far outweigh the financial disadvantages of having less commercial backing.

Tuesday
My brother Billy rang from Australia this morning. He wrote the screenplay for *HK* so he was over the moon when I told him about the Sundance Festival and said that Australian critics seemed to like it too. He's cutting one of the films in Tube Tales at the moment, which is a collection of short films set on the London Underground - God knows why he's doing it in Sydney.

Later on, I wrote a letter to Kate. I think she feels quite exposed at the moment - after her massive success in *Titanic*, everyone is waiting with bated breath to see whether she'll sink or swim in her next film. I wanted her to know how much people had appreciated her in the States - strangers were stopping me in the streets to give me messages of congratulation to pass on to her. Went to Soho House with friends tonight to have a drink and wind down. Slightly apprehensive about how the British reviews are going to be tomorrow, but so far so good...

Thursday
Did an interview for GLR today. Most of the publicity and promotions for *HK* have already been done, but there is a last-minute push as the film is on general release from tomorrow.

I am so pleased with the brilliant press reviews today. In general, I think they pick up and appreciate the mood and subtleties of *Hideous Kinky*. There was only one poor review - it suggested that the film came to nothing more substantial than a collection of holiday snaps. I thought it was the most mean-spirited little review, totally missing the point of the film. Ironically, it was *The Independent's*.

Friday
7.30am start. Spoke to the producer Ann Scott about yesterday's reviews; she was in a good mood. I'm thinking of slipping in to a showing of *HK* tonight. I like observing reactions incoherent from the general public. It's often more brutal, but always more honest than the glitz and glamour of celebrity premieres.

INTERVIEW BY JANE BOWERS

Scent of an elephant

It wasn't the best week to defend the circus, but Dea Birkett is smitten. By Kate Watson-Smyth

After her night of stardom in the Big Top, Dea Birkett sat among the small of computers on the London Underground, dreaming of elephant sweat. "I waited on Kennington Tube station thinking, 'I bet no one else here was working with elephants in the ring last night'."

After six months following circuses around Britain, Birkett joined the Scott circus in Sweden, where the form has a massive popular following and the ringmaster is treated like a film star. For just one night, Birkett wore a gold spangly dress and led the elephants into the ring for their nightly performance. Her job was to reward them with pieces of bread every time they performed correctly.

"It was magical. I was breathless. I cannot describe how wonderful it was to be surrounded by these enormous animals who are so powerful but so gentle," she says. "I have always wanted to stand in the middle of the ring and be applauded by a crowd who are genuinely transported by what they have seen."

"The elephants caress you with their trunks and afterwards you smell of their sweat, which is really musky, and your clothes are sticky from their dribble, but you don't mind because the whole thing was so wonderful."

Watching the animals in rehearsal, Birkett became convinced

that they loved performing. "Elephants are really very soppy and gentle, but they have moods just like everyone else. If they don't want to do it then they won't, and no amount of persuasion is going to change that. It's their call."

"One elephant, called Kitty, went off in the middle of rehearsal and started looking round the edge of the ring for popcorn left from the night before. Nobody minded because they knew she'd come back when she was ready, and she did."

"The trainers love their animals and have a lot of respect for them. The elephant tent is just two or three yards away from the caravan where the elephant trainer lives. He is always there. When I first stayed the night with a circus I didn't sleep at all; the animals are so close and you can hear them every time they move in the night. This closeness breeds an incredible intimacy between man and beast. You smell animals all the time - you never leave it."

On her first day at the Scandinavian Circus Scott, which is sponsored by IBM (a marketing team that alone illustrates how massive the Scandinavian circus is), she worked with Marco the elephant trainer.

"Everyone has this image that elephants are trained with sticks and whips, but he just opened the boot of his car and it was full of stale bread. I'd brought a packet of jelly beans but he said that was bad for



Dea Birkett: 'The elephants caress you with their trunks and afterwards you smell of their sweat, which is really musky'

Jenny Matthews

their teeth and they preferred bread. It's all part of the real concerns they have for the animals." The Chipperfield case which caused such a stir in this country is, says Birkett, an anomaly.

"I spent six months with circuses and I never saw any cruelty at all." She is convinced that the cruelty filmed by inspectors at the Chipperfield circus was uncharacteristic of circuses.

"I think the court made the right decision and I don't defend her, but I don't think that because there are isolated incidents the whole industry should be condemned. There is no doubt that the animal activists have won the propaganda war and circuses are under siege in this country. They are being harassed

and hounded and treated like outlaws - but they are pursuing a perfectly legal profession and the activists refuse to have a reasoned debate about it."

Birkett has certainly spent more time with the circus than most

that animals perform when their spirits have been broken and they carry out the act by rote.

"The saddest part of the circus is the training, and that is the cruellest part. We have spoken to lots of animal trainers and they have told

wrong. After all, in the 1800s people regularly gathered in their local market square to watch criminals being hanged, and they thought that was entertainment."

Jan Creamer, director of the pressure group Animal Defenders, which obtained video evidence that led to Chipperfield's conviction, says that no circus animal ever has enough space to live in. "Dea is seeing what she wants to see. The reality is that all the animals are kept in small cages and spend a lot of time travelling around. Even if the trainers do love their animals - and some of them do - they don't have the facilities to look after them properly." But Birkett describes a coherent community centred entirely on the circus. "These people live in

caravans for at least nine months of the year. If you ask them where is home, they say 'the circus'. If you ask them what is their nationality, they say 'I'm from the circus'. There are over 20 nationalities in one circus. If the Moroccan tumbler marries the French trapeze artist, their children are from the circus. Their notion of home is a community of people."

Sitting on the Tube platform in south London, she continues to feel an acute nostalgia. "When the circus moves on, every trace of it disappears. Even the holes from the tent pegs are filled in and it's as if it was never there. It's like a dream and I long to return."

'Circus Days Circus Nights' is on Channel 4 on Tuesday at 11.35pm

'Elephants have moods just like everyone else. If they don't want to do it they won't'

opponents who hold equally trenchant views, but the animal rights campaigners question how much reality she saw.

Diane Westwood, of the Captive Animals Protection Society, says

TEL: 0171 293 2222

CLASSIFIED: INDEPENDENT TRADERS

FAX: 0171 293 2505

House & Home	House & Home	Gardening	Unusual Gifts	Health & Leisure	Mobility
DOES SITTING MAKE YOUR BACK ACHE? BACKFRIEND <p>CALL NOW 0800 018 0353</p>	BATHE-EASY, THE ULTIMATE WALK-IN BATH, THAT NEEDS LESS SPACE THAN A NORMAL BATH <p>CALL NOW 0800 018 0353</p>	TURTLE DIRT TRAPPER MATS <p>CALL NOW 0800 0722300</p>	GENUINE BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS <p>CALL NOW 0181 763 6363</p>	OVERCOME IMPOTENCE <p>CALL NOW 0800 163861</p>	Stairlift Rentals. <p>CALL NOW 0800 19 19 19</p>
WE MAKE SOFAS AND SOFA BEDS <p>CALL THE FACTORY SHOP 0181 533 0915</p>	CHINA SEARCH <p>CALL NOW 01292 619311</p>	NATIONAL FRUIT TREE SPECIALIST <p>CALL NOW 01292 619311</p>	Luxury Silk Briefs for Him <p>CALL NOW 0171 274 3387</p>	DISCOUNT VIDEOS & CDs <p>CALL NOW 01235 864007</p>	CONSERVATORY TOO HOT? <p>CALL NOW 07071 223 629</p>

Japan's most sinister cult is making a creeping return. But a tiny village is mounting stiff resistance. By Richard Lloyd Parry

Aum: the second coming

Until the strangeness began at the very end of last year, nobody in Japan had ever really heard of Kita Mimaki. Its British equivalent would be one of the less charismatic villages of South Wales or the Scottish lowlands - a scattered collection of farms and holiday homes on a chilly flank of the Japan Alps. The locals refer to their village as "calm". The most striking thing about the place is the over-shadowing mass of Asama-yama, a ghostly mountain with a ragged peak that was created by a massive volcanic explosion in the distant past.

It looms over the village, dominating the skyline, and it is this mountain, as much as anything else, that seems to have drawn the strangers to Kita Mimaki.

The first sign that something was up was mundane enough: a 15-ft high aluminium fence was suddenly erected around one of the village's vacant properties. In a Japanese community, where everybody is expected to know everybody else's business, such a drastic attempt at preserving privacy could only arouse suspicions.

Nasty rumours began circulating, so the village government hired a private detective to find out what it could about the new owners of the property, a big, two-storey house in a large plot. The rumours turned out to be true. Now everyone who watches Japanese TV has heard of Kita Mimaki, and life in the village will never be the same.

The villagers have dug a trench around the property and have put up a barbed-wire fence of their own. Specially mounted video cameras keep it under constant surveillance, through TV monitors situated in an emergency command centre in a neighbouring building. And every day, around the clock, the property is patrolled by teams of 100 villagers, alternating by rota out of a pool of more than 2,000 volunteers. The aim of all this security is not to guard the house and its contents, but to prevent its legal owners from getting in. For as the private detective soon discovered, the true purchaser of the property was not the lawyer named on the title deed, but the notorious religious cult, Aum Shinri Kyo.

The impact of the discovery on a place such as Kita Mimaki is hard to over-estimate for, as undesirable neighbours, Aum Shinri Kyo have no equal. The cult was founded in the Eighties by a half-blind guru who calls himself Shoko Asahara, and its members embarked on a series of bizarre and outrageous crimes which for years remained unsolved by the Japanese police. As early as 1989, according to confessions by former members, they murdered a lawyer who had been acting against the cult, along with his wife and baby. A string of other killings followed, of young men and women who were trying to leave the cult. In 1994, seven people were killed by mysterious fumes in Matsumoto, a city close to Kita Mimaki.

The climax came on 20 March 1995 when, in an apparent attempt to hurry along the Armageddon predicted by their guru, his followers released poison nerve gas in the Tokyo subway.

It was the height of the morning rush-hour: 12 people died and more than 5,000 others were blinded or fell ill. During the raids and trials that followed the guru, Asahara, is still being tried, in a case that could drag on for a decade, it emerged that the gas used in the two attacks was sarin, a nerve agent invented by the Nazis. The cult's many chemists had manufactured it from scratch, in a series of "facilities" alarmingly similar to the property in Kita Mimaki - isolated buildings in small villages overshadowed by another beautiful volcano, Mount Fuji.

"We know what they did in the past," says Masayoshi Mizushima, director of the anti-Aum headquarters. "What's to stop it happening again?"

When a party of about 30 Aum members turned up in Kita Mimaki early one morning last month to move into their new property, they were greeted by 500 villagers who had been summoned from their beds at dawn by the village's public address system.

"There is no other way," says Shinichi



They shall not pass: villagers in Kita Mimaki keep a round-the-clock watch on the house purchased by the 'sarin' cult, Aum Shinri Kyo

Stuart Isett

Ide, the chief of the village's volunteer fire brigade, who stands on patrol in the snow. "This is a war between us and them, because once they get inside there will be no way to stop them."

And Kita Mimaki's problem is not unique. Remarkably, four years after its uniquely horrible act of terrorism, Aum Shinri Kyo is not only still in existence, it is undergoing something of a revival. Membership is up, its businesses are flourishing, and virtually every month brings reports of new property purchases.

There is an Aum website, there are Aum computer shops, and there have been unsuccessful attempts at setting up Aum tuition services and, most fantastic of all, an Aum babysitting business.

The Public Security Investigation Agency (PSIA), the closest thing Japan has to a domestic intelligence bureau, has published two reports warning of the resurgence of the cult.

"As far as we can see," says Mr Kai, the head of the PSIA's Aum unit, "the potential danger represented by the cult hasn't diminished at all."

That Aum should even exist, let alone be in the process of expansion, may seem remarkable enough. In 1997 the cult was stripped of its tax privileges as a religious organisation; many people assumed that after it had been revealed (in sworn court testimony) as a murderous fraud, Master Asahara's followers would quietly disband. But the following year, those of the cult's leaders who had not been arrested

and jailed regrouped, and former members began to return. According to estimates by the PSIA, the group now has some 700 "monks" - active resident members who leave their homes and families to devote themselves to meditation, ascetic practices and voluntary work on behalf of the cult. On top of this are 1,500 non-resident "laymen", far fewer than the 11,000 members who once followed Asahara, but enough to provide a pool of free labour for its profitable computer manufacturing business.

The cult has recently distributed flyers around Tokyo, according to the PSIA,

still denying the charges against him. "They seemed abnormal," says Mr Mizushima about the cultists who turned up that January morning in an unsuccessful attempt to move into their new house. "Their eyes didn't focus. They looked as if they'd been brainwashed."

But an encounter with Aum itself produces a very different impression. It is surprisingly easy to arrange: a couple of phone calls, a list of questions, and faxed directions to a house in suburban Tokyo. Outside is a clutter of bikes and boxes; the door is opened by a smiling young man in

leaders, he suddenly found himself a senior member. He is polite, shy, articulate and entirely lacking in obvious creepiness or insincerity. For four years, he has taken on the unenviable task of fielding questions and requests from the invariably hostile Japanese media. Aum's line on the sarin attack and other killings is not to deny that they took place, but to wait and see how the trials unfold. The cult's members still carry out what they call "religious training" - Shoko Asahara's personal combination of meditation and yoga, assisted by the use of bizarre "headgear", an arrangement of wires and electrodes that is said to connect the wearer to the "brainwaves" of the guru himself.

The teachings of "the Master" are still central, and he remains the heart of the cult, although his place as leader is now occupied by his children - his 13-year-old daughter, Rika, known by the Sanskrit name Achari, and two sons, Akiteru and Gyokko, aged six and four. The Aum posters feature these two little boys sitting in the lotus position in purple pyjamas, their eyes closed in concentration. "They emit light, and when I meet them I too am illuminated," says Mr Araki. "They are very special, unique beings." He and his fellow cultists are odd, rather pitiable people. They wear strange clothes, sing strange chants, and revere a man who probably ordered the cruel deaths of 20 people. But do they really deserve to be feared as they are?

In March 1995, Mr Araki was a low-ranking toiler in the cult's PR division; after the arrests of almost all the group's

from the new Aum. "We've never found evidence of danger," he admits when pressed, "and we think it's impossible for them to cause the same problem again." For a start, and even if they are wrong about their phones being tapped, they are monitored constantly, undergoing frequent raids by the police, whose behaviour sometimes verges on harassment. Last November, an Aum member won compensation after an incident (captured by chance on video) in which a police officer assaulted him, and then claimed that he himself had been attacked. The failure to anticipate the sarin attack, despite numerous clues and warnings, was the Japanese police's greatest-ever humiliation, and you sense in their excessive vigilance a desire to get even.

"I've listened to what the village people have to say and I understand their concerns. But it's the police and the media who are stirring up feelings against us, making people worried," says Mr Araki. "What the police want to do is create some kind of enemy, and draw attention to it, so they can create a scapegoat for society."

The true mystery of Aum is not what its members believe, but why they choose to believe it - why, in such a sophisticated society, it draws intelligent people such as Mr Araki. Aum is not an alien, but a home-grown monster, the offspring of late-20th-century Japan. "All of us are thinking it's very strange," says Mr Araki of Kita Mimaki. "Why does Aum have such appeal for people?" That is the most difficult and important question of all.

The villagers dug a trench around the property and put up a barbed-wire fence. The aim was not to guard the house, but to prevent its owners from getting in

recruiters have been active in some of Japan's most distinguished university campuses. It is in order to accommodate new members, according to the Agency, that it is acquiring property. "They look for isolation, space and mountains," says Mr Kai, of the PSIA. "High mountains have always been important to them, because of the spirits who live there."

Most creepy of all, according to the agency the cult has bought numerous houses near the Tokyo Detention Centre, where Shoko Asahara meditates in his cell,

glasses and the white outfit, a cross between martial arts clothing and pyjamas, which is the Aum uniform. Inside the house all the windows have been covered up, and weird, space electronic music plays constantly at low volume. In a room packed with computers, files and posters of Master Asahara, we are greeted by Hiroshi Araki, the closest thing that Aum Shinri Kyo has to an acceptable face.

In March 1995, Mr Araki was a low-ranking toiler in the cult's PR division; after the arrests of almost all the group's

The one that wanted to get away

ENTHUSIASMS FADE easily when you are eight and, thankfully, my son Darcy seemed to have forgotten all about fishing in the excitement of Christmas and the holidays. It's not that I am particularly averse to this pastime - I try to encourage any interest that involves no violence, television or computers. But though dangling a line over the side of a boat or reclining by a stretch of cool water as the sun goes down may be summer perfection, matters are entirely different in the depths of a wet English winter. Few activities could be less alluring than huddling next to a green tent beside an urban pond on a grey day.

So I wasn't about to remind Darcy of his love of fishing for a few months at least. But I reckoned without Greg, an electrician, jazz fan, Chelsea supporter

and angling enthusiast who lives round the corner. Greg had dropped by to fix a couple of light sockets, and we were speculating on why so many electricians are keen anglers, like the father of Darcy's school friend who sometimes takes the boys out for the day.

All this talk reawakened the angler in Darcy, and in the days that followed he took up the refrain, "Dad, when can we go fishing?" I stalled for as long as I could. "You may not mind the cold, but the fish won't bite in this weather," I insisted, as if I would know. But last weekend I ran out of excuses, so we set off on The Fishing Expedition.

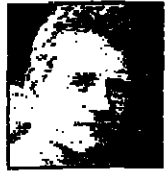
First stop was the angling shop, where Darcy spent a sizeable chunk of his personal savings on rod rests, floats, some hooks, some line, and a punnet of wriggling, pink-and-white maggots. We picked up some tips from the bloke who runs the shop, admired the photographs of regulars posing with their biggest catch in the front window, and pocketed various fishing courses and "Father and Son" family lessons at a lake near the M25. So far, I thought, quite a pleasant way to spend an afternoon.

Then, we walked and wrapped up against the elements (and me with a magazine to pass the time), we set off on the five-minute walk to the pond in our local park. My expansive mood came to an abrupt end, as it tends to, with the words, "Dad, can you set up my rod?" So I began the achingly tricky task of fastening on the hook with fingers that appeared to have swelled to twice their usual size.

Now came the float - another boded job - followed by the weights, tiny split lead balls that have to be bitten on to the line. I lost a couple, but managed to avoid swallowing them. Finally, Darcy was ready to cast, and I rewarded myself by taking a perch on a park bench and opening my magazine. "Dadad, the geese. Oh no, I've caught one." And there was a big fat goose, which had swum over nosily hoping for a slice of

stale bread, now tugging one grey foot that was attached to Darcy's line. I grabbed the rod and pulled. The goose pulled. The line broke. As calmly as I could, I repeated the whole setting-up process, then returned to my seat and my magazine, while Darcy cast once more. "Dadad, the geese are back..." I was still reading my first paragraph as I sprinted, shouting at the top of my voice, back to the pond. "Dad, why are you swearing at the geese?" Darcy inquired, hugely amused at my stupidity. As if they would understand! For once, I thanked heaven for the early winter evenings. "We'd better go now - it's getting too dark to see." Darcy had only had about five minutes' fishing, but it had taken us all afternoon. Perhaps it's time to book one of those Father and Son fishing lessons.

PARK LIFE



BRUCE MILLAR

Once you've seen the amazing bargains in our sale, you'll want to sit down

FROM £650 UP TO 25% OFF NEW DESIGNS

SALE NOW ON

UP TO 50% OFF SHOWROOM MODELS

50 DESIGNS AND 20,000 FABRICS

With sofas and chairs hand-made to your exact specifications at no extra cost, and fantastic cut price offers, why not visit one of our showrooms now, you'll soon find yourself sitting pretty.

Call our 24 hour brochure hot line: 01992 637 820

OMEGA

Chestnuts: Delamare Road, Chestnut, Herts EN8 9TF. Erix 25, M25. Phone: 01992 626 686
Stevenage: 21 High Street, Old Town, Stevenage, Herts SG1 3BG. Phone: 01438 722 412
Opening hours: Mon - Sat 10am - 5.30pm (Sun 10am - 3.00pm Chestnut only)

Alfred Janes

ALFRED JANES was an artist of great gift and originality. Born in Swansea, where his parents kept a fruit shop, he was one of a remarkable artistic generation from that town which included the painter Ceri Richards, the poets Vernon Watkins and Dylan Thomas, and the composer Daniel Jones, all of whom became close friends.

He showed precocious promise, always loving to draw and paint, and after Swansea Grammar School, he attended Swansea College of Art, where, in 1931, he won a scholarship to the Royal Academy Schools in London. Janes enjoyed the academy at first, especially the drawing classes under the exacting eye of Tom Monnington, but the lure of modernism in the nearby Cork Street galleries proved disturbingly distracting, and he left the schools before completing the course.

He stayed for some time in London, painting in the succession of Chelsea flats he shared with William Scott, his closest friend at the Academy Schools, and later with Dylan Thomas and Mervyn Levy. These were Depression years: hard times but happy times, spent in unforgettable company. In 1934 he painted his first portrait of Thomas, now in the collection of the National Museum of Wales. It remains the best portrait of the poet, cooler and less romantic than that by Augustus John, to whom by curious chance it owes its survival.

Janes left behind the paintings and drawings he had made in his last London flat and most of them were lost forever, but not before Cedric Morris and John had collected a few, including the portrait, for an exhibition of Welsh painters held in Cardiff.

In 1936 Janes returned to live in Swansea, where he remained until the Second World War. During this period he painted a series of still-lives and taught part-time at Swansea College of Art. The handful of still-life paintings he made in the Thirties are among his finest achievements. They were painted with extraordinary precision and painstaking slowness, each taking many hours a day over several months. In a letter to Vernon Watkins, written after the war, Thomas ironically recalled this pace: "How is that blizzard painter, that lightning artist, that prodigious canvas stacker? Has he reached the next finch of the fish he was dashing off before the war?"

The still-life subjects of these extraordinary works are seen as through a crystalline glazed grid, a

faceted transparent screen, behind which fish and fruit are transformed into a mineral brilliancy. They are utterly unique in the art of their time.

Janes joined the Army soon after the outbreak of hostilities, but defective vision (of a purely mechanical kind) kept him in the non-combatant Pioneer Corps. On leave in November 1940 he married Mary Ross, "auburn-haired leading light" of the lively Swansea Little Theatre, an amateur outfit at the heart of the lively art and culture of the town. He was posted to Egypt, where he remained for two and a half years without home leave, working in a prisoner-of-war camp.

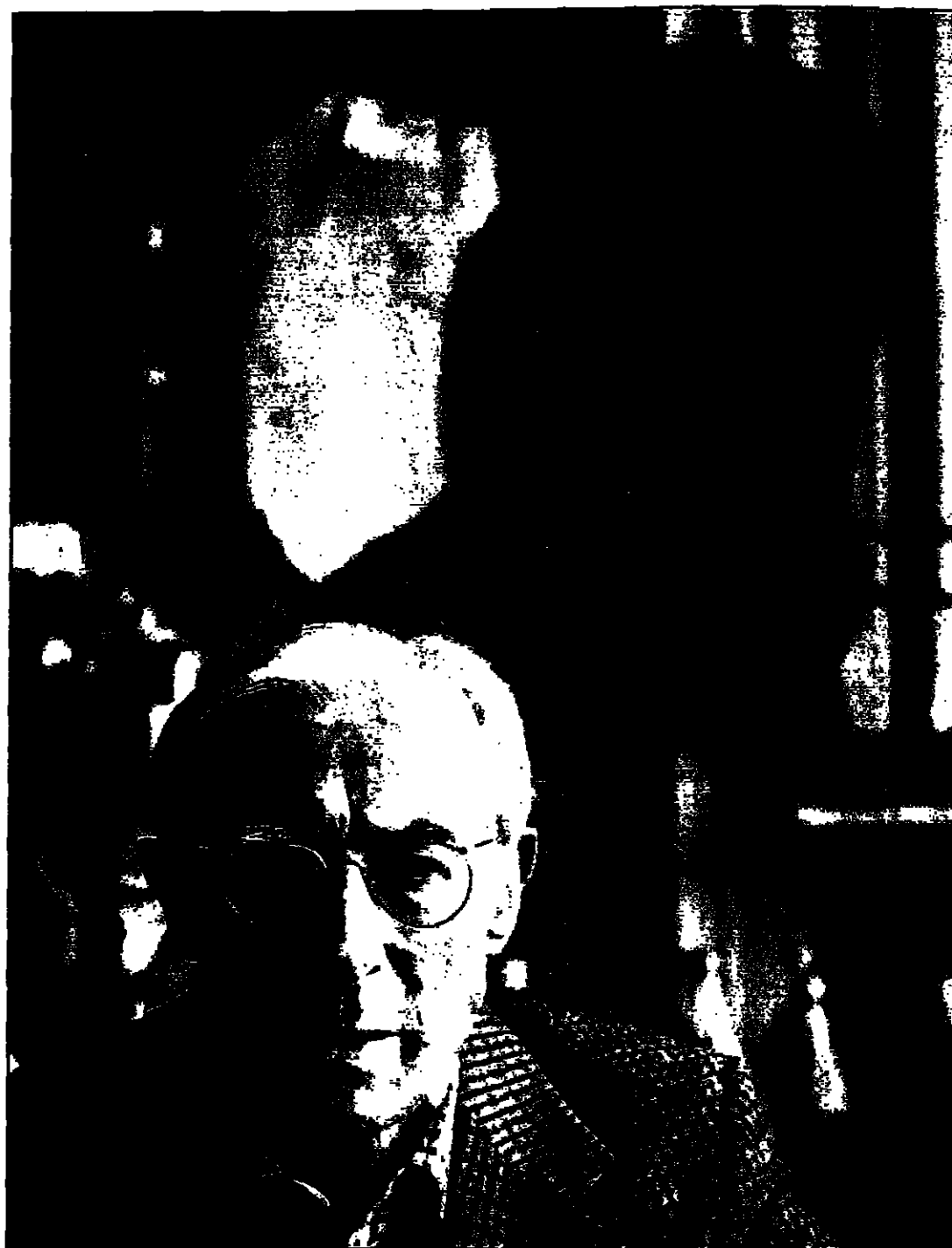
A gifted linguist, he learnt Swahili and, from the camp inmates, fluent Italian. He became a passionate lover of Italy and the Italians, frequently visiting the country and maintaining friendships made in

'How is that blizzard painter, wrote Dylan Thomas, "that lightning artist, that prodigious canvas stacker?"

the camp for the rest of his life. He made no paintings during the war.

Back in Swansea in 1946, he returned to painting and teaching. During this period he made memorable portraits of Vernon Watkins and Daniel Jones. In 1953 the Janeses and their young son (a daughter was born the following year) moved to the rambling and then remote Nicholas Hall, a hillside manor house overlooking the sea on the Gower Peninsula, where he used the barn for his studio, and embarked upon a series of experimental works using sand, various oils (including Castrol) and hardboard.

The rigours of the country life, however, did not really suit this most urbane of artists, and in 1963, invited to take up a post at Croydon School of Art, he moved to Dulwich, where he lived happily for the rest of his life. Of teaching, Janes wrote, "[It is] perhaps the best thing we can



'If what comes out is art, that's a bonus'

Glyn Griffiths

do - certainly for me, a great pleasure and a very great privilege." Down to earth and absolutely without affectation, he was an inspired teacher, remembered by students and colleagues alike with respect and affection.

At Croydon he was famous for the meticulous care he took to construct the still-lives, placing fruit and fish, jugs and fabrics to most effectively test and develop the students' perceptions of light, colour and form. Fred Jones took to his teaching a formidable knowledge of techniques, learnt in his own experimental practice and generously shared, and great theoretical knowledge of colour and of the psychology and philosophy of perception.

As painter and draughtsman Janes was wonderfully able to catch at the likeness of life, to make a picture of the visible. Throughout a long career he resorted, without any im-

itation of style, to representational modes. There were the vivid paintings and drawings of his creative friends, and formal portraits of the famous and distinguished (Iain Macleod, Dr Thomas Parry, Sir Iwan ap Owen Edwards among many others) by which he made the occasional supplement to his teaching income.

In the Forties and Fifties there were satirical and genre paintings, and in the Sixties and Seventies photowork collages and perspex reliefs. In the Eighties he painted a series of dream-like shorescapes. But he was driven by a relentless curiosity, and his painting and construction-making were essentially a kind of research, a pursuit of the real. If this led to abstract experiment Janes happily followed it in that direction.

He loved music, the most abstract of the arts, playing the piano every day, and, like his close friend Ceri Richards, he saw close parallels be-

tween composing and painting. He was above all a committed modernist, his denial of signature style and personal gesture a critical and creative abnegation, as well as the expression of a natural modesty and self-effacement. He described himself as "a maker of pictures, rather than a painter". "I concentrate on the craft," he once said, "and if what comes out is art, that's a bonus."

Time will confirm that many of the pictures he has made are indeed art of a high order. His art celebrates, sometimes with the ironic wit so characteristic of the man, sometimes in comic mood, sometimes with a surprising poetic lyricism, the infinite variety of the world as given.

MEL GOODING

Alfred George Janes, artist: born Swansea 30 June 1911; married 1940 Mary Ross (one son, one daughter); died London 3 February 1999.

Philip Fielden

IN ONE of those perceptive reports which come from housemasters at Eton, Philip Fielden's abilities were described as not those of a scholar, although he worked hard and had a great gift of concentration: "I have a very high opinion of his character. I have never had the slightest reason not to trust him implicitly. I think he has a very sane judgement: he has great personal charm." As a soldier and horseman, fisherman and picture-framer, Fielden was to prove C.A. Gladstone prophetically accurate.

From 1937 to 1939 Fielden was up at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he rode and danced, joined the OTC and the Gridiron Club, was elected to the Bullington, and, in the long vacation of 1938, learnt German with the families of Lehnardt and Stein of Steinort in east Prussia. His experience of the Germans was that they "are law-abiding, but not sleep-like; they have high ideals of honesty and honour".

Here is an early indication of the way in which Fielden could surprise the uninitiated. He had a good mind, which could be sharp and incisive. He learnt to express himself clearly, notably in his 1991 memoirs, *Swings and Roundabouts*. There he recorded going back to Magdalen to receive his degree in 1976 "in exchange for the modest sum of £7 (£3 for the degree and £4 for the hire of cap and gown)".

Meeting someone older than himself he said, "I am here, sir, because my studies were interrupted before I could take a degree, by the Second World War." "Funny you should say that," he replied, "I am here because my studies were interrupted by the First World War." This was Sir Austin Strutt, who lived at Slough Manor.

In his youth, he told me, the manor had been surrounded by wooded parkland. Now, he related wryly, at the end of one forested drive stood the Odeon Cinema, while the back premises lay in the shadow of Marks and Spencer's.

At the age of 20, Fielden enlisted and in 1940 joined the Royal Dragon Guards in Palestine. After exercises during which he carried on his saddle a rifle and a sword, the Royals were converted to the Marmion-Harrington armoured car, powered with Ford V-8 engines shipped to South Africa. After only four months' preparation in Cairo, they proudly drove out into the Western Desert in June 1941. "The strongest incentive that motivated us all equally," he was to write, "was a wish not to let the side down."

It was on 29 May 1942 that a direct hit in the petrol tanks below his feet led to a concealed injury from which he was later to suffer years of pain, ill-health and depression, and to the award of the MC. "It came as a complete surprise, more so since Knightsbridge had been a defeat followed by a major withdrawal." Here can be seen two further personal traits, his courage, which was both physical and moral, as he was to prove as a stipendiary steward, and a natural modesty.

He was back with his squadron for the break through after El Alamein and recalled 1 November 1942 when they "leaguered in absolute quiet, a strange contrast to the conditions under which we had spent the last 10 days" and on to the cessation of hostilities in North Africa in May 1943. Thereafter he served in Italy, and, on 8 June 1944, landed in Normandy before going to Staff College in 1946. Here he discovered that he could express himself on paper with "reasonable fluency" as *Swings and Roundabouts* was to confirm.

After serving with General Miles Dempsey, to whom he was devoted, in the Far East, and then in Cairo, Fielden was posted to Berlin in 1947 and his subsequent service in the British Zone was lightened by race meetings and horse shows.

In 1953 Fielden decided to look for a horse which he could ride in the Grand Military Gold Cup Steeplechase and had the good fortune to run into Major Charles Radclyffe, who purchased Atom Bomb for him. David Gibson, who had won the Grand Military on Klaxton for the previous three years had to pull out. Atom Bomb won but, as Fielden wrote, "in truth the 1953 race was the nadir of the Grand Military, never in memory had there been such a small and undistinguished field."

The next year Fielden was third on Roughen, and in 1955 he won on Skatealong, all three horses bought in Ireland by Major Radclyffe (who

hunted them with the Heythrop) and trained by Cyril Mitchell. As Tom Nickalls wrote in *Sporting Life*, Fielden was "a most capable horseman". A fourth success was in 1958 with Golden Drop which Fielden had in partnership with Captain Simon Bradish-Ellames.

From January 1959 until July 1961 he returned to BAOR in Germany to command his regiment, the Royals. He had never been encouraged to think that his abilities would get him beyond the rank of major but now comparative greatness was thrust upon him. He benefited greatly from the support of his wife, Caroline, whom he had married in 1955, the presence of their two children, and the loyalty of the regiment which he fiercely reciprocated. The Royals were posted from Germany to Aden, and on to Malaya under his command.

When Fielden retired from the Army Harvey Roscoe suggested he might become a stewards' secretary for the Jockey Club, "colloquial: stipe", which he did from 1963 until 1972 and the case histories which he records are still instructive even to those with little knowledge of racing, as in endeavouring to define why every jockey must be seen to make a reasonable effort to win or be placed. What is or is not a reasonable effort can only be decided at the discretion of the stewards; it will be a matter of fine judgement.

For instance, Fielden listed five factors:

i) the horse should have the experience of at least one race before he is ready to be asked for the supreme effort, ii) that the horse will require one or more races before he would be fit enough to be asked to go and win; iii) that the trainer wants to see your horse perform against horses with known form before he can advise you (the owner) to back your horse, with confidence to win; iv) that he may wish to give the horse a preparatory race or races so that he will be ready to win when you return from your holiday in Bermuda; or v) that he Chelmsford, while the back premises lay in the shadow of Marks and Spencer's.

Sadly his account of the race, "Salisbury on 1 July 1970, Weyhill Stakes, five furlongs", was considered too controversial to publish. It was a tour de force "but events had moved far out of the sphere of stipes".

Fishing, pre-eminently for salmon with a fly, meant as much to Fielden as horses. He first went to Norway in 1933, to Flak at the head of the Bangsund fjord, 40 minutes' walk to the river Bongo, where he acquired experience and confidence. He recalled the vast pool at the top of the river Bolstad which was "virtually unfishable". He loved the element of privacy, and deplored the over-fishing due to "greed" of which the Norwegians complain today.

The Slaney in Co Wexford and rivers in Styria, for trout, followed. Forty years later he tried Chile for rainbow trout on the Lago Velho, and Argentina on the river Trafal. Winter fishing in the Southern Hemisphere appealed, and, after two unsuccessful visits, he and his wife had "a week of unique fishing" for mackerel on the river Cuvey south-west of Mysore. They found good sport in Iceland with visits to the Hofsá, the Kjos, to Hafjardara, "a fine river with big fish", in 1987 and the Grimsa. Last summer, once more, they returned to the Cree in Dumfries and Galloway.

It was Julian Johnston who taught Fielden to frame pictures, to cut the mounts, and choose the mouldings for watercolours and prints. It was an occupation which he could pursue at home, in his beautifully equipped and presented studios, first at Hook Norton Manor (the Fielden family have an eye for a fine house) and, latterly, at Adlestrop. He realised that he had, after a year's apprenticeship, a latent sense of colour and proportion, two essentials without which a framer cannot hope to be successful. Thus it was that, despite adversity, there were more swings than roundabouts: to quote Patrick Chalmers, as he did, "What's lost upon the roundabouts we pull up on the swings."

Frail he might be; but he never lost his personal charm, a twinkle in his eye, his sense of humour; nor his unfailing courtesy as a host.

IAN LOW

Philip Brand Fielden, soldier, horseman and fisherman: born Kington, Warwickshire 2 April 1919; MC 1942; married 1955 Caroline Burder (one son, one daughter); died Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire 2 December 1998.

Lesley Maber

THE REMOTE village of Chambon-sur-Lignon at the northern end of the Cévennes has become the symbol of everything that was finest in occupied France.

Elsewhere there was betrayal or simple acceptance. But in Le Chambon, as it was called, there was a resistance to the persecution of the Jews that recalled the Huguenots of past times resisting their own persecution. The commune of Chambon was Protestant and its pastor, André Trocmé, made it into a purposeful force. In 1940 it became the first community to be honoured as Righteous Gentiles by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Authority in Jerusalem.

Lesley Maber, who was English, was one of the heroines of Le Chambon. Women were particularly important in the village. It normally housed a population of about 1,000 people, with perhaps double that number living in surrounding farms and hamlets. Yet some 5,000 Jews were sheltered there, and whilst some could be crammed into cellars and attics, many of them were scattered over a wide area. In the neighbourhood there were also resistance groups, particularly from the beginning of 1943, when young men took to the hills rather than be conscripted for work in Germany.

Therefore there was always a problem of communication. Food and clothes had to be delivered, sometimes medicines and money and messages. This meant that there was continuous movement. For men this was particularly risky. They could be stopped and asked for their papers, whereas a woman carrying food and bundles of clothes was not in itself suspicious.

This was Chambon-sur-Lignon, where Lesley Maber found herself during the war years. She was a long-standing Christian Socialist who had always been attracted to the Continent, particularly to France. Having been a pupil at the North London Collegiate School, she went to university in Switzerland and France, taking a doctorate at the University of Lyons.

She was active in many educational ventures and in September 1939, when war broke out, she had taken a "colonie de vacances" to Le Chambon. She was uncertain what she should do, but she accepted Pastor Trocmé's suggestion that she should stay there and help with the teaching and with the boarding of boy pupils in her own "pension". The school had always had a

number of Jewish pupils. After the armistice of 1940 their numbers increased, partly because of Pastor Trocmé's reputation of opposition to the Vichy government's early anti-Jewish legislation, partly because it was an ideal place for refuge. Soon organisations for the care of refugees and other Christian and Jewish welfare agencies were establishing lines of escape through the convents of Savoie to crossing points into Switzerland, so that Le Chambon was also part of the process of escape.

Lesley Maber played a full part in the life of this community. As Magda Trocmé, the pastor's wife, used her boy scouts in order to keep in touch with everyone, Lesley Maber had her girl guides. She knew the dangers of her situation. She saw the Gestapo arrest Daniel Trocmé, cousin of the pastor. He was taken away, to die in Majdanek. She herself was arrested and put on a train to an internment camp. But representations were made to the Prefect of the department, the Haute Loire. When he learned how some years earlier she had adopted two children who had been abandoned by their prostitute mother, he ordered that she should be released. The order was received in time. She left the

train before it was diverted to Germany and its passengers sent to a terrible destination.

She returned to Le Chambon and continued to work as a teacher, nurse, distributor of food and false papers, contact with resistance groups and all the other tasks that befell this resolute woman, who after the liberation of France in 1944 rarely spoke of what she had done.

However she was angered by those whom she had helped write about Le Chambon (such as the American academic Philip Hallie and the film-maker Pierre Sauvage) when they suggested that Le Chambon was able to exist because of the benevolent attitude of the local German commander. It was true that some of the French police were particularly understanding. Another of Le Chambon's heroines, Madeline Barot, liked to explain how, when the French gendarmes had to make an arrest, they would stop in the café and discuss their intentions in loud voices. Half an hour later they would effect surprise to find that their intended victim had disappeared. But this comedy was not played by the Germans. Lesley Maber sought to put the record straight by writing her own memoirs, but she did not publish them (and she has confided



Heroine of Le Chambon

them to her nephew, Dr Richard Maber of Durham University).

After the war she worked in a French factory, then returned to the Collège Cévenol, where she taught until 1971. Thus there were many generations of French schoolchildren and their parents who had every reason to remember her with affection. She was one of them, with all the qualities of devotion, courage and spirituality that are admired, whether one is French or British.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON

Gladys Lesley Maber, teacher and wartime resister: born Crediton, Devon 20 July 1906; died Farnborough, Hampshire 6 January 1999.

Rudolf Karpati



Karpati, left, at the Rome Olympics in 1960

Hulton Getty

AS A member of the illustrious and world famous Hungarian sabre team during the Fifties and Sixties, Rudolf Karpati played an important part in his country's domination of international fencing over very many years.

Karpati competed in four Olympic Games, winning six gold medals - team golds in 1948, 1962, 1966 and 1980 and individual golds in 1956 and 1960. He also won seven World Championship titles.

He was born in Budapest in 1920 and studied at the Hungarian Acad-

emy of Music; he became a musicologist by profession, while continuing to pursue his sport. He dominated the sport at home, becoming Champion of Hungary prior to his international achievements. In 1965 he published his autobiography in Hungarian, entitled "Around the World with a Sword".

Although originally of the old fencing school based on the solid foundation of firm footwork and lightning but controlled parry-ripostes, Karpati very soon adopted a more fluid style. This enabled

him to deal effectively with the emerging athletically mobile tactics of Italian and French sabreurs.

Karpati was the model sabre fencer: tidy, wholly confident and self-contained. He was always quiet and polite to those who succumbed to his impeccable timing, his extraordinary, efficient parrying was followed by ripostes no more complicated than absolutely necessary.

It was indeed an experience and a privilege for me to fence against Rudolf Karpati on several occasions including the 1956 Olympic Games

in Melbourne and in Rome in 1960 as well as at several World Championships. He also kindly came to London in May 1963, along with three other international fencers, for a gala at the National Sporting Club to help raise funds for the new Amateur Fencing Association building.

Until comparatively recently the complicated nature of sabre fencing - in which hits can be made with both edges of the weapon as well as its point - has prevented the introduction of an electrified scoring system, which has been in use for several

decades for the sister events of epee and foil. Before electrical devices, sabre required four judges in addition to the President, and consequently a very particular technique on the part of the fencer. With the advent of the new system, there is no doubt that we shall never again see the like of Rudolf Karpati.

A. RALPH COOPERMAN

Rudolf Karpati, fencer and musicologist: born Budapest 17 July 1920; married (two children); died 1 February 1999.

Keisuke Kinoshita

ALTHOUGH AKIRA Kurosawa is the better-known film director in the West, in Japan Keisuke Kinoshita is revered as the greater genius, and the 50 or so films he made display a much wider variety of styles and themes, all expertly handled, than do Kurosawa's.

Kinoshita's work was a perpetual reflection of his whole philosophy of living, an idealism rare in the modern world whose ugliness and cruelty he despised and mocked in satirical comedies and heart-breaking tragedies. His aim as a director and scenario writer - he wrote nearly all his own scripts - was to preserve the purity and sense of beauty he had been taught to admire in boyhood.

While Kurosawa excelled in depicting male characters, Kinoshita specialised in sensitively directed parts for women, many of which were played by his favourite actress, Hideko Takamine. In her amusing 1980 autobiography, *Watazashimo Toshi Nidoki* ('Journal of the Way I Live'), she pays tribute to his inspired direction, but adds that he did not really like women.

In the summer of 1986 the first wide-ranging retrospective of his films was shown to an international audience, in the Swiss town of Locarno. It had followed his work from his first arrival in Japan in 1939, and so had seen a dozen or so of his films before he gave up the cinema for television after *Natsukashiki Fuyu no Taku* ('Nostalgia for Fuyu and Drums') in 1967. When he was persuaded to return to film-making in 1976 for *Sri Lanka no Ai to Wakare* ('Love and Heartbreak in Sri Lanka'), his heart was no longer in the subject, and among the four more late works he produced, the 1983 *Komoko o Nokoshite* ('Children of Nagasaki') was the only memorable one.

So the Locarno Festival was an occasion to see some of his early movies, which were a revelation. Among the best-known in the West are the over-sentimental ('three-handkerchief') weepie starring Hideko Takamine, *Nijushi no Hitomi* ('Twenty-four Eyes', 1954), based on the popular novel by Tsuboi Sakae; and *Narayama Bushiko* ('Ballad of Narayama', 1958), based on the controversial novel by Shichiro Fukazawa. Another full-scale retrospective of Kinoshita's work is ardently to be desired.

He was born in 1912, in Shizuoka Prefecture, in the city of Hamamatsu, where his parents ran a grocery store. From an early age, he was crazy about movies, and it has been said that he was the only Japanese director who was born to the cinematic art. From the age

of eight, his one desire was to direct films, and he rebelled against the attempts of his parents to make him study for a university career.

When Hamamatsu became the location for a new movie, a period film, the actors used to patronise his parents' shop, and that is how he came to know the actor Junnosuke Bando, who ran away with him to Kyoto, then the capital of period film-making. His grandfather brought him back home, and his parents finally gave in to his ambition to become a director. But Keisuke had to learn the art from the bottom up before he could even be considered by the studios.

So he worked in a photographer's shop in Tokyo, and entered the Oriental Photography School, from which he eventually graduated in 1933. He at once applied to be taken on by the Shochiku film company, and started in the film processing laboratory, until he at last became camera assistant to the chief cinematographer, Yasujiro Shimazu. When the latter became a director, he took on Kinoshita as his assistant.

Kinoshita later described Shimazu's working methods: "He relied heavily upon intuition, and didn't like to have everything calculated, and fixed in advance." This was to become Kinoshita's own light-handed, easy-going directional manner, relying on last-minute inspirations and sudden insights into character.

When the Second World War broke out, he served for a while in the army, but was sent back to Shochiku to write propaganda scripts, a task he hated, until at last he was promoted to director in 1943. It had been a long battle to reach this position, but now he had to contend with the stupidities of wartime censors. His first script was rejected as "not sufficiently patriotic" but he had better luck with the Information Ministry when they accepted *Hana Saku Minato* ('Flower-Blossom Port') set in the southern port town of Amakusa.

He was allowed a generous 40 days on location, and 20 in the studio, and this first feature showed immense promise. There is a charming evocation of the picturesque port, and what was to become typical dramatic and satirical confrontation between the pure-hearted country folk and cynical city schemers, between youthful love and exploitation of the innocent by hardened criminals. In the end, purity triumphs and the crooks are defeated in a comic turn-around.

City and country are again contrasted in the 1951 *Karumen Koko ni*



'Carmen Comes Home' was the first Japanese film shot in colour. In the tremendous heat the girls' heavy make-up kept melting and smoke started to rise from their pomaded hair

village headmaster, played superbly by the great Ryu Chishu, is gradually won round by the girls when they give a benefit performance to help rebuild his school.

One reason why the girls' make-up is so heavy is that this was the first Japanese film shot in colour. In those days, great trouble had to be taken to keep constant lighting levels, and each actor had a different tone of make-up. Ryu Chishu's complexion came out looking rust-red, and in the tremendous heat of both natural sunshine and artificial light, the girls' studied make-up kept melting and smoke even started to rise from their pomaded hair. Kinoshita had to start shooting a black-and-white version, just in case the final print of the colour film was a failure. Fortunately, it came out very well.

Kinoshita took the film to Europe, where he stayed for a while, in 1951. He met René Clair, whose light touch in comedy he greatly admired, though he also was devoted to the works of Julien Duvivier and Jean Renoir - the latter's *The River* in particular, which influenced his own *Fuefukigawa* ('River Feufuki'), 1960.

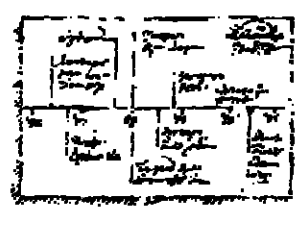
"The Ballad of Narayama" is the only other Kinoshita masterpiece to have been shown in Europe. It appeared on French television in 1996. Kinoshita was a devotee of the traditional theatre, and wanted to make a film reflecting those ancient dramatic techniques. An old peasant woman, as ancient tradition demanded, asks her son to carry her to the top of a mountain and expose her there to die, so that the poverty-stricken village will have one less mouth to feed.

There is a horrifying scene when she knocks her teeth out with a rock, so as not to be tempted to eat the food left to her and to stay alive a few days longer all alone. Kinoshita's handling of colour is masterly, and his sweeping panoramic shots of the mountains are sheer lyricism. Kabuki techniques are imitated, with painted interior sets, use of curtains, transformations, narrators.

It was an epoch-making event in the history of Japanese film-making, and only Kinoshita could have achieved such a sensitive combination of emotion and image, and such an inventive use of old dramatic conventions in a thoroughly modern use of film. This will undoubtedly be the masterpiece by which he will always be remembered.

JAMES KIRKUP

Keisuke Kinoshita, film director: born Hamamatsu, Japan 5 December 1912; died Tokyo 30 December 1998.



HISTORICAL NOTES

RICHARD BREITMAN

Official secrets of the Final Solution

ON 28 JANUARY American officials announced that they had intercepted conversations among senior Serbian officials about a massacre of 45 civilians in Kosovo. This evidence, they stated, demonstrated the need for an international war crimes investigation. It remains to be seen whether the announcement of near-perfect evidence of Serbian war crimes and the threat of punishment will work against Serbian officials. But open use of intercepted communications as a weapon against ethnic cleansing represents something of a reversal of the Second World War experience.

During the war Britain was able to intercept and decode tens of thousands of German police and SS radio messages. In 1997 the Public Record Office at Kew made transcripts of these messages available, along with some British intelligence analyses of Nazi operations on the Eastern front. These documents cast new light on the murderous activities of the German Order Police, which scholars of Nazi Germany had underestimated until the 1990s. New evidence also indicates that British intelligence had recognised a systematic Nazi policy of exterminating Jews by early 1942, before this information arrived in the West from other sources.

The information British intelligence secretly gleaned from SS and police radio

messages, however, went essentially unused during (and after) the war. Throughout most of 1942 Foreign Office officials and their counterparts in the State Department in Washington, lacking access to the direct German evidence, refused to credit reports coming in through Jewish and Polish channels that Nazi Germany was systematically slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Jews. In mid-December 1942, responding in part to other reports and to public pressure, the Allied governments formally recognised that Nazi Germany was pursuing a policy of exterminating the Jewish people, which produced a brief British broadcasting campaign to alert the German people to this monstrosity. In January 1944 the newly established United States War Relocation Authority began to use other intelligence about the Final Solution and to threaten punishment of those who took part or collaborated.

The "final solution of the Jewish question" was originally one of the great secrets of the Nazi regime. Officially, Nazi Germany was merely resettling Jews in Eastern Europe and using them for labour; deception of the victims was sometimes maintained until the moment of mass murder.

The idea of using information (combined with political, diplomatic pressure against Germany's allies and satel-

lies) to try to save lives during the Second World War is not a matter of hindsight; it was done on a limited basis relatively late in the war. But the earliest and best wartime evidence of Nazi killings of Jews - intercepted and decoded German messages - never was used at all, even though Britain did not have to compromise the secrecy of its code-breaking operations. It might have simply endorsed other reports about Nazi policies that reached the Government or the public.

The opportunity for Allied military intervention against the Holocaust was limited. All the Allied powers faced desperate military difficulties of their own in 1942. Neither Britain nor the US gave much thought to military operations to rescue or aid Nazi victims until the Allied invasion of France had succeeded more than two years later.

But military action was not the only possible Allied response. If the Allies had demonstrated earlier that the fate of Jews mattered to them, alerting potential victims and rescuers, warning Nazi collaborators, urging neutral countries not to turn away Jews seeking to escape the Nazi vice, tens of thousands more lives would likely have been saved.

Richard Breitman is the author of *Official Secrets: what the Nazis planned, what the British and Americans knew* (Penguin, £20)

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

LINDSLEY: To Clare and Ian, on 2 February 1999, at Kingston Hospital, a girl, Imogen Colleen, a beautiful sister to Phoebe, Isabella and Poppy.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, today attends the press launch of the Great Scottish Walk, at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh; and, as Patron, Scottish Rugby Union, attends the Scotland versus Wales International Match at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; No 7 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Welsh Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, in memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, obituaries, etc.) are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: The Right Rev Edwin Barnes, Bishop Suffragan of Richmond, 64; Mr Mike Batt, popular music composer and arranger, 49; Rabbi Lionel Blue, broadcaster, 69; Mr Nicholas Brett, former editor, *Radio Times*, 49; Mr Peter Cadbury, former company chairman, 81; Mr John Fleming, Warden, Wadham College, Oxford, 58; Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor, actress, 78; Mr Tom Harris, former ambassador to Korea, 54; Dr Christopher Hill, former Master Balliol College, Oxford, 87; Miss Gayle Hunnicutt, actress, 56; Mr Nevill Johnson, political scientist, 70; Mr Patrick McNeel, actor, 77; Mr George Mudie MP, Treasurer of HM Household, 54; Mr Denis Norden, writer and broadcaster, 77; Mr Manuel Orantes, tennis player, 50; Mr Ronald Reagan, former US president, 88; Mr Tom Richardson, ambassador to Italy, 58; Mr Mark Sheldon, solicitor and former president, Law Society of England and Wales, 68; Mr Brian Simpson, MBE, 46; Mr Jimmy Tarbuck, comedian, 59; Mr Fred Trueman, cricketer, 68; Mr Keith Waterhouse, writer, 70; Mr Kevin Whately, actor, 48.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Christopher Marlowe, playwright, 1564; Antoine Arnauld, theologian, 1612; Queen Anne, 1665; Ugo Foscolo, novelist and poet, 1778; Sir Henry Irving (John Henry Brodribb), actor, 1838; Isabella Mary Beeton (Mayson), cookery writer, 1835; George Herman ("Babe") Ruth, baseball player, 1895; Eva Braun, Adolf Hitler's mistress, 1912; François Truffaut, film director, 1932. Deaths: Thurstan, Archbishop of York, 1140; King Charles II, 1685; Lancelot "Capability" Brown, landscape gardener, 1783; The Rev Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, author of the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 1897; Gustav Klimt, painter, 1918; King George VI, 1952; Margharita Laski, writer, 1888; Arthur Ashe, tennis player, 1993. On this day: Maximilian I assumed the title of Holy Roman Emperor, 1508; James II acceded to the throne of Great Britain, 1685; Britain declared war on France, 1778; Great Britain and Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand, 1840; Crete proclaimed a union with Greece, 1897; the Boy Scouts of America were chartered, 1910; an Act of Parliament granted votes for women over 30, 1918; Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the throne, 1952; seven members of the Manchester United football team were among 21

English Nature, 54; Sir John Leahy, former High Commissioner in Australia, 71; Dr Barbara McGibbon, pathologist, 71; Sir George Moseley, former senior civil servant, 74; Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chairman, Kingfisher, 57; Sir Philip Myers, former HM Inspector of Constabulary, 68; Mr David Park, writer, 48; Mr Roy Watson, former director-general, the National Farmers' Union, 73.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Christopher Marlowe, playwright, 1564; Antoine Arnauld, theologian, 1612; Queen Anne, 1665; Ugo Foscolo, novelist and poet, 1778; Sir Henry Irving (John Henry Brodribb), actor, 1838; Isabella Mary Beeton (Mayson), cookery writer, 1835; George Herman ("Babe") Ruth, baseball player, 1895; Eva Braun, Adolf Hitler's mistress, 1912; François Truffaut, film director, 1932. Deaths: Thurstan, Archbishop of York, 1140; King Charles II, 1685; Lancelot "Capability" Brown, landscape gardener, 1783; The Rev Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, author of the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 1897; Gustav Klimt, painter, 1918; King George VI, 1952; Margharita Laski, writer, 1888; Arthur Ashe, tennis player, 1993. On this day: Maximilian I assumed the title of Holy Roman Emperor, 1508; James II acceded to the throne of Great Britain, 1685; Britain declared war on France, 1778; Great Britain and Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand, 1840; Crete proclaimed a union with Greece, 1897; the Boy Scouts of America were chartered, 1910; an Act of Parliament granted votes for women over 30, 1918; Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the throne, 1952; seven members of the Manchester United football team were among 21

killed in an air crash at Munich, 1958; agreement was reached between Britain and France on a Channel Tunnel, 1964. Today is the National Day of New Zealand and the Feast Day of St Amand, St Guarinus of Palestine, St Hildegund, Saints Mel and Melchior, St Paul Miki and his Companions and St Vedast or Vaast.

TOMORROW

Births: St Thomas More, 1478; Thomas Killigrew, playwright, 1612; Charles John Huffam Dickens, novelist, 1812; Franz Friedrich Richard Genée, conductor and composer, 1823; Sir William Huggins, astronomer, 1824; Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev, chemist, 1834; Harry Sinclair Lewis, novelist, 1885. Deaths: James Stewart, second Earl of Moray, murdered 1591; Jan van Eyck, painter, 1479; Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, painter and engraver, 1801; Pope Pius IX, 1878; Adolphe Sax, inventor of the saxophone, 1854; Thomas Sidney Cooper, painter, 1902. On this day: Edward of Caernarvon (later King Edward VII) was created Prince of Wales, 1901; while visiting the British Museum, William Lloyd smashed the first-century Portland Vase, 1845; the main group of the Dead Sea Scrolls was discovered, 1947. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Adaeus, St Luke the Younger, St Moses, St Richard, "king", St Silvian and St Theodore of Heraclea.

LECTURES

TODAY: National Gallery: Rachel Barnes, "Love G", Rembrandt, *Saskia van Uylenburgh in Arcadian Costume*, 12 noon. Victoria and Albert Museum: Sorrel Heshberg, "European Arts and Crafts", 2pm. British Museum: Nicole Douek, "Empire Builders of Ancient Egypt", 11.30am;

Nicole Douek, "Egypt and Nubia", 1.30pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "A Lesson in Looking by the Master: Ivan Lermolov", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery: Valerie Holman, "Bloomsbury Portraits", 3pm.

TOMORROW

Victoria and Albert Museum: Grace Lees, "Dress and Textile Design in the early-20th Century", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Sarah O'Brien Twibig, "Commentary on Rodin and Gwen John", 4pm. National Portrait Gallery: Tim Heath as Lytton Strachey in *Ermyntrude and Esmeralda*, 3pm.

ROYAL VICTORIAN ORDER

A Service of the Royal Victorian Order will be held in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, at 11am on Thursday 28 April, followed by a reception in the State Apartments of Windsor Castle for all members and medallists of the order attending the service.

Due to the limited seating capacity of St George's Chapel, tickets for the service and reception will be restricted to members of the Royal Victorian Order and holders of the Royal Victorian Medal only. Please do not apply for tickets for spouses, or other guests. Honorary members and medallists are not eligible to attend.

Members of the order and medallists who wish to attend should apply for a ticket as soon as possible, and not later than Friday 12 March, clearly stating their name, address and grade within the order. They should also state if they require a parking permit. Application should be made to the Registrar of the Royal Victorian Order, The Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, St James's Palace, London SW1A 1BH.

Ian Paisley and other sacred cows

SOME PEOPLE have problems believing God exists. Mine is slightly different: I don't believe in religions. For when you look closely at the concept of "religion" it becomes almost as diffuse as the notion of "Anglicanism".

There is no single practice or belief which is always and only religious. Neither is there any guarantee that "religious" ideas have anything in common with each other - not even that they can all grow in the fertile mud that lines the skull of a football manager. Yet the word is a useful one. It does mean something important to say that Europe is entering a post-religious age, though it clearly does not mean that we are entering an age of rationality or even of unbounded credulity.

One way round the difficulty is to talk about "organised religion" but I think this is just weasel-ish because organisation is one of the defining qualities of a serious religion, without which it cannot long persist. We don't normally talk about "nourishing food" or "mothers with children" or "organised religion" as a similar tautology.

What makes a religion "organised" is more than simply discipline. The boundary between religions and cults may be obscure, and fuzzy, but it certainly exists. There are cults and sects which are far more ferociously disciplined than traditional forms of Christianity. There are some which seem to have emerged from that state to become full-blown religions: Mormonism comes to mind. But there is movement in both directions, as other fragments of established religions sink into cult-hood, like some of the wackier Pentecostal churchlets, with their belief in divinely inspired leaders.

The definition of a cult seems to have more to do with the relations between the members and the society around them. Sacred cows are part of a religion in Uttar Pradesh. But when you see them cropping peacefully in the Hertfordshire commuter belt, you know you have found the Hare Krishnas' mansion. Though the movement is organised, and a reli-

gion, its distance from most of the surrounding society means that its white members certainly are practising what we might call disorganised religion. Sometimes, of course, this transfer into a foreign society can render a religion more rather than less benevolent. The heart sinks a little at Ian Paisley's missionary journeys in West Africa or Wales, but at least his followers do less harm there than in Northern Ireland.

If I am right, and Paisleyism in Cameroon is a cult of sorts, whereas in Northern Ireland it is a religion or part of one, this shows at least that religions are not necessarily more benefi-

FAITH & REASON

ANDREW BROWN

The difference between a cult and a proper religion lies in the ability to found proper universities - which is why modern faith communities are not producing any

cent, still less benevolent than cults. But there is one form of organisation of which only religions are capable. It combines discipline, organisation and a healthy relationship with the surrounding society. The fact that it no longer happens in Europe summons up exactly what is meant by secularisation. The golden test is this: proper religions can found universities.

By this token, European Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Confucianism and possibly Hinduism are certainly religions. I know there are American fundamentalist universities. Ian Paisley got his doctorate from one, but that's not the only reason for distrusting them. The US also have a University of the

Hamburger, and I don't think that's part of a religion either. A proper university cannot be fundamentalist, since fundamentalism is a 19th-century reaction to the discovery that knowledge and religious truth may be incompatible. A real university can't be so afraid that it can only go out into the world wearing blinkers. A friend of mine taught for a while at an Islamic University in Malaysia, and found the experience completely stupefying simply because everything thought or taught had to be checked to see if it drifted into forbidden territories.

Religions need more than unself-conscious intellectual confidence if they are to launch universities. They need money; libraries and learning have always been expensive, even if scholars are cheap. And they need the confidence of the society surrounding them. A university is not a vocational college. It's not even a seminary. It is something which is recognised to benefit the whole of the society surrounding it. All of these are resources which are beyond cults, almost by definition. They are certainly beyond disorganised spirituality. A university of the New Age would be as much use as a Hamburger University, even if there were anything solid to study there.

The links between Western European Christianity and the universities have collapsed almost completely. I think that Cardinal Newman was the last man to attempt to found a religious university in these islands, and certainly the idea would never occur to anyone today. This is perhaps the most concrete meaning that can be attached to the idea of a post-religious society. This distinction has the further advantage of holding even in Eastern Europe, where religion is alive partly because its connection with universities remains organic. Which explains why a former Polish university professor like Pope John Paul II, who really believes that a university without religion has lost its soul, thinks in ways which seem so completely alien to most Western intellectuals.

Lost in translation

Michael Hamburger's huge contribution to our knowledge of German literature – his versions of Günter Grass's poetry are about to appear – has obscured his own reputation as a poet. By Michael Glover

This is the story of a literary life translated from the German. In 1933, the year of Hitler's accession to power, a nine-year-old German boy called Michael Hamburger, one of four children from a prosperous, upper-middle-class Jewish family, left Berlin for Edinburgh with his parents and siblings, to escape from the possibility of persecution and death. Little by little, the boy became an Englishman. He went to prep school, Westminster public school, and Oxford. He served as a humble private among working-class squaddies in the British Army – his father had received the Iron Cross for distinguished service in the German Army.

After the war, Hamburger, a dreamy, introspective, book-saturated youth, pursued a peripatetic literary life, teaching in universities, writing poems, essays, works of literary criticism. He also became the best, and best known, translator of German poetry into English of the post-war years, tackling some of the most daunting texts imaginable – the works of the 19th-century schizophrenic poet Friedrich Hölderlin, for example, and the poems of Paul Celan, whose intensely private and tortured Holocaust-haunted lyrics are some of the hardest peaks that any translator might ever be tempted to scale. Almost untranslatable, you might think – except by someone like Hamburger, who has devoted years of his life, on and off, to doggedly unpicking their monstrously tangled threads.

Hamburger is both proud to have served as a conduit for the great German-speaking writers he has translated, and also intensely irritated when yet another critic describes him, in print, as "best known as a translator from the German..." In fact, he squirms in his carver as I mention the fact to him.

We are sitting, facing each other, in the study of his long, rambling patchwork of a house – part Tudor part 17th century, part 1920s – just outside a village in East Suffolk. It is early afternoon. The light is bleached out, watery, already falling. He has just come in from the lane, having dealt with a steaming heap of horse manure. Just perfect for the grapevine, he'd said to his wife as he worked away with his shovel.

Now a cat is sleeping, idly post-prandial, on the window seat, beside a new edition of *The Truth of Poetry* and many others of his books, all leaning sideways as if a little weary too. Beyond the bay window is his garden and orchard, all three-and-a-half acres of it, teeming with plum, mulberry, yew, elder, and, his great pride and joy, a collection of rare species of apple

tree, including two that came from Ted Hughes's garden in Devon – Devonshire Quarrenden, he tells me later, a dark red, almost purple apple. The pond, alas, has no fish in it. The heron saw to that.

"The thing is," he rasps at me – he will be 75 in March, and though a little deaf now manual work keeps him quick and sprightly when he moves about, bounding over tussocky grass, or zipping from room to room in search of books to prove a point or illustrate an argument – "they use all this talk about me as a translator as an excuse for not reading my own poems properly and also as a way of disparaging them. It doesn't make any difference what I'm better known for. The fact is that I've been writing my own poems since I was 14 or 15, and for me, it's my main activity. Translating is a skill, something which I can practise the whole time, whereas I can't write poems the whole time." It's a hectoring

'I have separated translation from my writing. It has always been a kind of service'

tone of voice, a voice accustomed to fighting its corner. His fiercely disciplined hair sweeps straight back from his forehead.

A skill? Merely a skill? I query. Had it not in fact been a lifelong compulsion? (He started translating Hölderlin as a schoolboy, at the age of 16, and has continued to revise his own versions over a period of 60 years...) And, what is more, hadn't it held him back, and perhaps even frustrated him, as a poet in his own right, the fact that he had had all these other voices clamouring for attention, and for imaginative space, inside his own head?

"No, not at all," he insisted. "I have separated it entirely from my own writing. To me it is, and always has been, a kind of service. It may have been a very strong psychological need though, as you say – which is now less strong than it was when I was young. And perhaps that was to do with the fact that I myself had been translated from one culture to another..."

Suddenly, he glances down. "Hello, puss..." He looks up at me again, as does the cat. "The family call her Cinnamon, but I just call her Pussy." He is careful to give that word two quite distinct syllables. "I don't give cats names." The cat, mildly disturbed – if not affronted – by this excess of attention, bolts.

This month sees the publication of

Michael Hamburger's translations of the selected poems of his old friend Günter Grass – the very last project of this kind, he tells me. When he was younger, he felt that he had a kind of continuing responsibility for German literature, to translate it and to write about it. Not any more, though. He has translated all the poets he wanted to translate. Now his mental space is entirely his own. I notice an etching by Grass hanging on the wall – are those founders moving in profile? They are almost too elusive to identify in the dying light of this room.

What is the one thing that all these German-language writers have in common? I ask him. In what exactly does the Germanness of German writing consist? He's completely stumped by the question at first. He doesn't want to generalise. He taps at the arm of his chair with a thick, horny fingernail. Then finally he begins to hazard a guess.

"Well, they've always been found extremely strange by English readers – even when they were first discovered by the Coleridge and Wordsworth generation, and then, a little later, by Carlyle. And this strangeness has to do with their intransigence, I think. They were alienated from society to a much greater extent than their English counterparts. And they invented, of course, that strange thing called the *Bildungsroman*, which was supposed to trace the integration of an individual into society – as though society and the individual were two entirely different things, and you had to make a great effort to integrate yourself into it." He gives a quick and harsh laugh. "Whereas everybody in England always felt themselves to be a member of society, however much they may have disliked certain aspects of it, or criticised it, or been in revolt against it."

I wonder how much this applies to Michael Hamburger himself? Is he inside now – or outside? Perhaps a little of both. Perhaps that is part of the challenge – and part of the affliction – of bilingualism, and of being translated as a child.

Then, our formal discussion over, we walk from room to room of this warren of a house, so fascinating and so strangely beautiful in its decrepitude, climbing up a narrow, dimly lit staircase so that I can inspect the ship's timbers from which the beams of one of the Tudor cottages were fashioned, staring at the foot-wide floorboards of a 17th-century room. "Oak," says Michael Hamburger, tapping at it with the point of his sturdy shoe. "It's such a marvellous wood. It goes on forever." Wood as the final guarantor of cultural continuity in a disposable age.

There are books, books, heaps of



Michael Hamburger: I've been writing my own poems since I was 14 or 15. It's my main activity

envelopes, files of letters, here, there, everywhere. And, beneath the shelves of books, there are sometimes shelves of apples. Just look at all this!" he says. "Terrible! Terrible!" This can't be quite true though. This rummage of things represents a life of thought, argument, contention.

I ask him about his pattern of work. He's up at 7.30am in the winter months, earlier

still in the summer. If there's a poem underway, he'll work on it. If there's not, it's a matter of dealing with his voluminous correspondence. He writes replies to letters on the day that they're delivered, getting them back into the post-box before the postman's had time to empty it.

Was TS Eliot right? I ask him before I brush past five or six stout walking sticks on my way out of the door. Is the literary

life a mug's game? "I can't say," he replies. "That is actually what it's all about: you can never be sure..."

Michael Hamburger's translation of Günter Grass's *Selected Poems 1956 to 1993* is published on 15 February by Faber, £9.99; Hamburger's *Collected Poems* was recently published in paperback by Anvil Press, £12.95

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

CALLING ALL actors *manqués*: get down to the Hampstead Theatre where there is a fascinating new development which I forecast will spread through theatres across the land and give hope to life's underdogs. The theatre, which has a strict policy on not admitting latecomers until a suitable break, is to start giving the aforementioned latecomers a synopsis in the foyer of what they have missed. No matter what time they arrive, a staff member will duly give a synopsis up to that point. If only this could become common practice. It is a marvellous opportunity, a public audition, a chance to play the whole cast.

"Now, at this point Ewan McGregor gives that sexy smile to the front stalls, rather like this..." Of course, it would have taken a confident female member of staff to précis the first 20 minutes of Nicole Kidman in *The Blue Room*; a true man of the world to summarise the latest Irvine Welsh. But these are challenges underdogs should thrive on. And if the performance in the foyer is good enough, with a bar on hand as well, why bother to go into the auditorium at all?

embarrassing loss of some extremely expensive Constable sketches. But I must beware misinterpreting the reasons for that. It is no doubt due to lack of space.

SIR DENNIS Stevenson has provoked a timely debate with his remarks that modern composers can be arrogant and elitist. But his views have not gone down too well with modern composers. Stephen Montague, who is both composer and artistic director of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, has written to the redoubtable Sir Dennis, who is chairman of Sinfonia 21, in the strongest of terms. "I am flabbergasted by your ignorance of the current contemporary music scene," he says, adding, "I cannot believe that these unpleasant characteristics (elitism and arrogance) are any more prevalent in the composition profession than in your business community." Ouch! as they say in new music circles.

IT IS a hazard of working in the arts that you begin to talk in antipathetic a tongue thousands in the country now spout like natives without realising it. This column will chart the growth of this exciting new language. One example came this week when Helen Carey, who is in charge of public art at At-Bristol, the new science, nature, art and discovery centre being built in the Bristol docks, gave a presentation on the art that will be involved in the millennium project. Even the underground car park will be artist-designed, as you will see, said Ms Carey, when you return "to rediscover your car".

Only connect and all becomes clear

MONDAY'S ALL-BOULEZ concert by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis was originally destined for the BBC's studio in Malda Vale: a decision suggesting a sad loss of conviction. Roger Wright, the BBC's new controller of music, insisted on its transfer to the Festival Hall and the live broadcast of both this and Wednesday's London Sinfonietta programme at the Queen Elizabeth Hall under George Benjamin.

Gratifyingly large audiences for both concerts provided an appropriate rebuttal to the view that few these days can be bothered with the more challenging kinds of new music. The notable absence was, in fact, that of Boulez himself: too busy composing, it appears. Wright's own illuminating interview with the composer was

also televised on BBC2 late on Wednesday night: the first time in heaven knows how long that a new music event conceived by the radio-based team has influenced the television schedules. Perhaps things at the BBC really are looking up after all.

The extended elaborations of "Eclat/Multiples", which opened Monday's programme, seemed far too protracted here, where Davis's relative lack of experience in the "traffic-cop" kind of direction this score requires also showed. Yet, while the BBC SO is not the orchestra it was when Boulez himself was its chief conductor in the early Seventies, this long evening gathered momentum. The Eighties revision of the early at times almost endearingly engaging but also

CLASSICAL

PIERRE BOULEZ:
A PORTRAIT
BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
RFH, LONDON

THE FRENCH CONNECTION
LONDON SINFONIETTA/
GEORGE BENJAMIN
QEH, LONDON

powerfully multi-faceted, "Le visage nuptial" – including splendid vocal contributions from Christine Schaefer, Susan Parry and the women of the BBC Singers, as well as a huge orchestra – was notable for the control of its constant ebb and flow between lyrical effusion and volatility. After the

interval came "cummings ist der Dichter" and "Notations I-IV", the latter receiving a scintillating account.

The second half of Wednesday's concert saw the British premiere of an already revised version of Boulez's recent "sur Incises" (on incisions). Though the combination of three each of pianists, harpists and percussionists is enticing, the alternation of basically static and faster types of musical material in much cleaner contours, both texturally and formally, could not sustain my interest during its now 40-minute span.

The premiere of Gerard Grisey's "Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil" (Four Songs for Crossing the Threshold), also 40 minutes long, made the Boulez appear lightweight. A "musical meditation on death", this sets four

fragmentary texts – from modern French, Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Mesopotamian sources – for soprano (Valdine Anderson, intense and captivatingly lyrical) and an unusual ensemble of 16 players. Linking these extended, repetitive settings with the rapt rustlings of percussion, Grisey weaves an, at times, almost unbearably moving course through his mostly desolate texts.

Despite the more diatonic oscillations of the concluding lullaby, the work nevertheless cannot ultimately bring much consolation. The composer's own death shortly after completing it must not be allowed to deprive us of more opportunities to hear his music in Britain than we had when he was alive.

KEITH POTTER

A light touch

NORTHERN BROADSIDES seem more and more at home in their Halifax base. The players wait for us in the mill undercroft whose cavernous spaces they render surprisingly warm and intimate. When we are settled they launch into an a cappella version of "O mistress mine": the good life indeed.

The show ends with its reprise, poignant as an embrace thrown about a play with the plight of castaways at its heart. There are the shipwrecked twins, Viola and Sebastian, but the sponging Sir Toby, scheming to keep Sir Andrew from going home, is forever in danger of being put out of doors. Feste's mysterious comings and goings suggest his insecurity and this production's final image shows Olivia's door shut against him. Malvolio, whose vocation is to keep an orderly house, ends up in a dark hutch as a result of his overweening desire to be master of it. Even Orsino and Olivia

THEATRE

TWELFTH NIGHT
THE VIADUCT, HALIFAX

are emotionally rootless. So when the decorations come down there is a starkness about *Twelfth Night*. But its beauty lies, of course, in the exact degree to which it is glimpsed through the prevailing lightness. There is a perfect such moment here when Paul Besterman's Feste sings the heart-stopping "What's to come is still unsure... Youth's a stuff will not endure" to Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, who sit glistening with the effort of concentration so recognisable in sentimental drunks. The different veins are visible, too, in the superb scenes between Helen Sheals's Olivia and Julie Livesey's Viola. At first pallid with cultivated grief, the tiny Sheals zooms into coquettish sexiness as she encounters the disguised Viola's urgency. In turn Livesey is

comically and touchingly amused and delighted to discover this evidence of her sexual power.

Surprisingly it is the play's darkest patch, where the gulling of Malvolio goes beyond a joke, that carries least force. Barrie Rutter's patterned cardigan shows us the kind of stickler he is aiming for, but he always seems as though he can take a joke, so the eventual cruelty of his baiting lacks pain. The balance between him and Joshua Richards's Sir Toby and John Gully's brilliantly credible Sir Andrew has to be a fine one; here the weight is too much in favour of this two-man barny army. Together with last autumn's brilliant *Samson Agonistes*, Rutter's production shows how inventive and versatile Northern BroadSides can be.

JEFFREY WAINWRIGHT

The Viaduct, Dean Clough, Halifax until 6 February, 01422 369704; then touring

Smoke without fire

DANCE

PACO PEÑA FLAMENCO
DANCE COMPANY
PEACOCK THEATRE
LONDON

From this, Peña and Peter Bunyard have attempted to string some kind of scenario together about a conflicting duality, about the Gypsy as the Muse or Musa (Cecilia Gomez) and her opposite, the elegant Dama (Mayte Bajo).

The narrative is tenuous and haphazardly presented. The long scene depicting an Easter procession makes sense only if you know it echoes a painting not shown during the performance. The Muse is ultimately stabbed by her jealous lover, yet you could not tell this without reading the painter's biography in the programme beforehand. The company's leading male dancer, Angel Muñoz, represents the faintest idea who the two other-

men are, black cloaks and all. Better perhaps to concentrate on the music and dance. Together they mirror Torres's two sides by alternating the desolate wail of flamenco with Ramon Medina's gentle modern folk songs. The nine dancers expand flamenco's percussive rhythms and rearing postures with freer, broader shapes. In Mayte Bajo's solos these cross into ballet, as she unravels a series of turns, her bias-cut evening dress fluttering. Angel Muñoz looks as striking as on his previous visit, black Assyrian curls and eagle profile intact.

So why doesn't the air crackle with excitement? Because Javier Latorre's choreography rations flamboyant virtuosity and prefers a long-winded lyricism. *Musa Gitana* is in the image of Peña, whose own muted stage presence is the antithesis of theatricality. I felt I wanted my flamenco straight, with all its infectious clichés of noise and fire.

NADINE MEEHAN



THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES

EXCELLENT				GOOD				OK				POOR				DEADLY			
OVERVIEW				CRITICAL VIEW				OUR VIEW				ON VIEW							
THE FILM HIDEOUS KINKY				"About as substantial as a joss stick," quipped Anthony Quinn, adding, "the film keeps setting up potential narrative lines and abandons them just as they threaten to become interesting." "Happy nostalgia, stronger on scenery than story," decided the <i>Daily Mail</i> , while <i>The Guardian</i> found it "likeable but lightweight." "While the episodic incidents show zest, they rarely fuse into something more substantial," observed <i>Uncut</i> . "A movie of considerable subtlety and intelligence," gushed <i>Time Out</i> , continuing, "it's a perceptive look at love, responsibility and conflicting needs. Spot on." "A small marvel," cried <i>The Times</i> . "Charming," revealed <i>Elle</i> .				More a series of snapshots than serious drama, Gillies Mackinnon's picture proves insubstantial. But there are fine performances from the two children and some dazzling Moroccan scenery.				<i>Hideos Kinky</i> is on general release, certificate 15, 99 minutes							
THE DANCE EDWARD II				"It has been a long time coming to London, but it was worth the wait," revealed Nadine Meisner. "The action sweeps you up in its headlong rush like a tautly-plotted thriller, even if it is at the expense of choreographical subtlety." "Fine, imaginative costumes from Jasper Conran complement Peter J. Davison's sleek, yet monolithic settings," declared <i>Time</i> .				Out. "Brinkley has made a tremendous work... powerful, mature, choreographically well-wrought," exclaimed the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> . "Bintley at his most expressive," reported the <i>Financial Times</i> . "There is much posturing in the choreography [and] some of the bluntness of the writing borders on the kitsch," demurred <i>The Times</i> .				Sensational set-pieces by Bintley are given tremendous support by his company. Conran's costumes provide an authentic air of sado-masochism while McCabe's score reinforces the drama's every twist.				Tonight's is the last performance of <i>Edward II</i> . For bookings, call 0171-863 8000			
THE EXHIBITION ANDREAS GURSKY				"Gursky's pictures aren't trying to pass themselves off as normal photos. They're trying to be super-photos, pictures that, through artifice, are excessively good at being the things a normal photo might wish to be," noted Tom Lubbock. "The beauty of these images is tempered by a pervading bleakness," decided <i>Time Out</i> . "Gursky shows how the camera's ever-expanding resources can convey a vision as unsettling and eloquent as any to be found in the art of our time," trilled <i>The Times</i> , while the <i>Evening Standard</i> found: "In spite of being so thoroughly staged and processed, Gursky's images look unquestionably real." "More like abstract paintings," muttered the <i>Sunday Times</i> .				While the abstraction of Gursky's images border on the painterly, the discernible artifice of his digital manipulations are at once unnerving and compelling, bleak and beautiful.				Andreas Gursky is at the Serpentine Gallery until 7 March. For bookings and enquiries, call 0171-402 6075							
THE TV PROGRAMME SEX AND THE CITY				"Underneath the modern exterior, its view of sexual relationships seems dreadfully old-fashioned. Boiled down: it's a sex war, with women looking for Mr Right and men for anything they can get away with," observed Robert Hanks. "Wretchedly thin water... Unreflective reportage that teaches us nothing," reported the <i>Evening Standard</i> .				"There can never have been a more cynical TV show," bleated the <i>Daily Mail</i> , though <i>The Times</i> disagreed, noting "a sheen of intelligent sophistication that so many British comedies lack." "Busy and entertaining as a weekend in Manhattan," remarked <i>The Guardian</i> . "One-dimensional characterisation," snarled <i>Time Out</i> .				The series is only interested in the sexual mores of the rich, glamorous and thin, offering banal insight into the human condition. As conservative as a night in with <i>Terry and June</i> .				The next episode of <i>Sex and the City</i> can be seen on Wednesday 10 February at 10.30pm, on Channel 4			
THE BOOK ALL IN THE MIND: A FAREWELL TO GOD				Kennedy's book is not an open-minded exploration of the role of 2,000 years of European faith; rather it is a vituperative polemic against the very business of belief," wrote Paul Valley. "It is not a work of philosophy, but the product of great experience and reflection," opined <i>The Sunday Telegraph</i> . "Perhaps some wavering theists will find Kennedy's voice of urbane fatuity just the call they were waiting for to join the A-team," remarked the <i>Evening Standard</i> . "Blessings on his atheist soul, Ludo points out that being a non-believer does not make you a bad person," said the <i>Daily Record</i> , while <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> uncovered "a pervasive sprinkling of errors".				Kennedy gathers a catalogue of Christianity's inconsistencies and conveys his (dis)belief like a true preacher, but his proselytising tone makes it hard to take the book seriously.				<i>All in the Mind: A Farewell to God</i> by Ludovic Kennedy (Hodder & Stoughton) is now available in bookshops							

EXIT POLL

VISUAL ARTS
PATRICK CAULFIELD
HAYWARD GALLERY
LONDON

GEORGE STUART MCLAREN
80, retired, London
"It's a fantastic exhibition. I was particularly interested in why the lighting is so dull when they are such bright pictures. It is like showing pop art in a dim light. Perhaps it's to make us take more meditation over the paintings."

MADLINE CHURCHILL
18, student, Swansea
"It was good to see his work over time. I admire the use of colour blocks, the balance between reality and abstract. It struck me how the shapes are sculpted by monotonous black lines, and it's as if they are coming out from within the colour. You are tempted to go close to the paintings, but you also have to stand at a distance to get the whole illusion."

MATT JOHNSON
26, illustrator, London
"I really loved it, especially the Seventies' period; the patterns, the textures and the wallpaper-effect. One thing that struck me is the influence of Juan Gris, the Spanish cubist painter, which came and went. It is quite strong in the Seventies, particularly the way the paintings divide in to columns. It is a very graphic, powerful and unusual exhibition."

NATSUHI INOKUCHI
24, student, London
"I was surprised to see English art using such modern colours. It was interesting on so many levels; how it incorporates architecture, interiors, and is very scenic. And it seems rigid, but if you look closely there are very effective tweaks in the lines."

A potholer's guide to time and space

THE VENUE for so many prosaic scenarios (bodies hurled under trains, bomb-scores, the malodorous intimacies of the rush-hour), the London Underground has also haunted the imagination of poets. Both TS Eliot in *Pour Quartiers* and Derek Walcott in his stage version of *The Odyssey* have used the Underground as an analogue of the classical Underworld. But then again, you don't need to be a genius to feel that this location offers a pretty graphic sneak preview of hell.

Now, though, if you descend 30 metres below The Strand to the murky, labyrinthine innards of a disused tube station, you will find that the Underground has been commandeered for somewhat less gloomy reflections. A collaboration between the writer, John Berger, and Theatre de Complicite director, Simon McBurney, *The Vertical Line* takes you on an imaginary journey backwards in time, and downwards in space, to the Charnel cave in France. It was here, in 1933, that paintings of animals were discovered which, dating back 32,000 years, constitute the oldest man-made images yet found.

A spooky combination of intrepid potholing and reverberating meditations on time and art, this powerful experience aims to make us feel the force of the past's immensity. A typical observation is that as we travel backwards, the units for measuring time grow larger and larger, just as, in the opposite direction, units of money burgeon through inflation. The evening begins with saturation bombardments by television images and ends in a tunnel of palpably dense darkness where we join in the attempt to recapture what it must have been like to break the vacuum seal on these un-paintings, momentarily collapsing the concepts of "then" and "now".

In between, chivvied by London Transport safety staff understandably keen that no one breaks their neck, the journey takes in a huge circular shaft where spectral images of Berger lecturing on the astonishingly ageless Egyptian funerary portraits from Fayum are projected on the bleak wall. It also includes a sequence where you lie on a line of mattresses on a defunct platform, like figures in a Henry Moore evocation of the Blitz, and look up at lonely cloudscape which are shifting across the barrel-vaulting while Berger, aping the tones of a foreign correspondent, offers a front-line report on Corsica 3,000BC.

Alongside the attempt to deepen our sense of historical duration and of the continuity between the unimaginably distant past and the present tense of this event, the main philosophical point would seem to be that it is naive to call the art of the cave painters "primitive". "The need to make images did not precede the talent for doing so," declares Berger. Al-



Down the tube: 'The Vertical Line' Geraint Lewis

THEATRE
THE VERTICAL LINE
ALDWYCH STATION
LONDON

bombardments by television images and ends in a tunnel of palpably dense darkness where we join in the attempt to recapture what it must have been like to break the vacuum seal on these un-paintings, momentarily collapsing the concepts of "then" and "now".

In between, chivvied by London Transport safety staff understandably keen that no one breaks their neck, the journey takes in a huge circular shaft where spectral images of Berger lecturing on the astonishingly ageless Egyptian funerary portraits from Fayum are projected on the bleak wall. It also includes a sequence where you lie on a line of mattresses on a defunct platform, like figures in a Henry Moore evocation of the Blitz, and look up at lonely cloudscape which are shifting across the barrel-vaulting while Berger, aping the tones of a foreign correspondent, offers a front-line report on Corsica 3,000BC.

Alongside the attempt to deepen our sense of historical duration and of the continuity between the unimaginably distant past and the present tense of this event, the main philosophical point would seem to be that it is naive to call the art of the cave painters "primitive". "The need to make images did not precede the talent for doing so," declares Berger. Al-

PAUL TAYLOR
A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper

Sundance rides into the sunset

"DID YOU go to the festival this year? You should have." This was this week's New York independent film-makers' mantra. The festival was the Sundance Film Festival, so far from these film-makers' homes in Brooklyn and downtown Manhattan. Ever since *Reservoir Dogs*, Robert Redford's expanding, deal-crazy Utah film market has been under attack for becoming a celluloid bazaar. Redford's dingy cradle of "indie" film is now a Hollywood-on-skis. They call it the Cannes of the West. I've always stayed at home, though, and I imagine that Sundance is like Prague now.

This year, Redford turned permissive parent, both blaming the media for the festival's corruption and saying he would tolerate the event as long as it was good for the film-makers. The hot film was *Happy, Texas* (1999's titles alone are clichés of American independent film: *Twin Falls*, *Idaho*

— *My Own Private Twin Peaks* — and *Happy, Texas* — *Paris, Texas* meets *Happy, Texas*). A major New York critic tells me that *Happy, Texas* is "sucky", but the film still reaped \$2.5m from Miramax.

Nonetheless, this week critics and distributors and producers defended the fest. They've reconciled themselves to the fact that independent films are just commercial films with denser scripts and characters. They've put to rest that nagging sense of betrayal when so many of these films turn out to be flops.

These festival-goers tell me that we should appreciate this event for its new directors, that we have Sundance to thank for finding Tarantino, and *Boogie Nights*'s Paul Thomas Anderson and *Slacker*'s Richard Linklater.

But was it Sundance's boozy bonhomie and the seductions of the

great find? Last week, I was at home in New York so I missed the Sundance hot ticket, a doc about a porn star/college student who sleeps with 251 men in 10 hours, *Sex: The Annabel Chong Story*. (Annabel Chong's publicist had to say silly things all festival, like "Tickets to Sex?"). She calls the film's star "an overachiever." Perhaps the film's star had escaped from this year's new counter-Sundance Festival, *Lap Dance*, a porno film festival in Utah, like *Slam Dance* and the now defunct *Slum Dance*.

Suzanne Fedak, an indie film promoter, says she wanted to go to *Lap Dance* when she was at Sundance, but instead she was busy getting blessed by Native Americans. Then she danced to DJ Spooky. New York after Sundance she calls "post-coital." "You should go next year," she murmurs.

Owen Gleiberman, film critic, has one complaint, that the festival was "overrun with anonymous hangers-on." He then says: "That's not to say that hangers-on don't belong there." Do those hangers-on, pressing into lighted Utah ski cottages affluence with Affluence (Casey and Ben), watching a film about the Beats and then listening as the film's director praised the Beats for bringing blue jeans to the work place — belong? If not, why not? I am told that a mark of a non-hanger-on at Sundance is screaming amounts of money into one's cellular. One producer was caught in the aisles of a Park City supermarket — unaware that the film-maker on the receiving end was talking on his cellular phone in the aisle next to him. Maybe next year I'll go to Sundance and be appalled by the stillbirth of independent film. I'll auteur/messiah-watch, only to return to New York with a long list of the year's worst "buzz" films.

NEW YORK
DIARY



ALISSA QUART

hired entertainers Duncan Sheik and The Violent Femmes that made attendees praise the prizewinner *Judy Berlin*, a film about suburban melancholy, that from all descriptions sounds tedious and lardy? And is the new Stephen Dorff, Steve Zahn, such

THE WEEK
IN RADIO



MAGNUS MILLS

pulpit. In January 1649 the king sat at his trial in Westminster Hall as Judge Bradshaw, Solicitor Cook and Cromwell himself began proceedings against him. There were some fine moments as Charles (John Rowe) refused to recognise the court and reminded

them with quiet certainty that: "I am your King."

This was the main flaw in the prosecution's case. Yet there's something else that people tend to forget about Charles Stuart. He may have been a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy (the charge that finally did for him), but he was without a doubt much more interesting than most other monarchs, and for that deserves at least a nod of recognition. By all accounts his personal conduct on the scaffold was exemplary. Drowned out by the beating of army drummers, he tried to make a final address to those near him, but few heard. Then, after asking if the block could be higher (it couldn't), he went to meet his maker. Even when heard on the radio, the blow of the axe was not for the squeamish.

Until only last week the penalty for treason remained death. As Marcel Berlins pointed out during *Law in Action* (Sunday, Radio 4), there still exists a set of gallows still in full working order, but when Jack Straw signed the Sixth Protocol of the European Human Rights Convention the death penalty was at last abolished.

Unfortunately things were different in the 17th century. After the fall of the republic, Charles II was restored to the throne and reprisals soon began. Solicitor Cook saw himself as a "good Commonwealth man" but this didn't save him from being hanged, drawn and quartered. Neither was Hugh Peters spared. "His execution was very popular," remarked a contemporary. "It delighted the crowds."

WIN FOUR
NIGHTS IN
NEW YORK

UK Arena, BBC/Flextech's cable and digital channel, is the UK's premier arts entertainment channel. Tonight (Sat 6 Feb), it is showing a night dedicated to stories from the Big Apple.

Called New York Night, the night kicks off at 6pm with a look at the life and work of one of the greatest composers of the 20th Century — LEONARD BERNSTEIN. Next up — take a look at the brilliant and eccentric world of the CHELSEA HOTEL in this classic documentary at 7pm. Footage from late 70's New York music scene follows with *DANCING IN THE STREET* at 8pm, while you can glimpse the vibrancy of New York life in a series of short films at 9pm — NYC POSTCARDS. The highly acclaimed film *STONEWALL* follows at 10pm and the night wraps up at 12pm with a story of the glamour and excess of the New York club scene — *PARTY MONSTER*.

To celebrate the presentation of New York Night, we are offering a lucky reader and a friend the opportunity to win a four night holiday in New York at the four star Franklin Hotel on East 87th Street. Return flights are with British Airways departing from Heathrow on Thursday 18 March returning on Monday 22 March. All you have to do is to dial the number below, answer the following question on the line and leave your name, address and a daytime telephone number.

Q: Which famous statue is located in New York?

CALL: 0906 470 0930

UK ARENA

Calls cost 60p per minute and should last no longer than two minutes. Winners will be picked at random after the lines close at midnight on 12 February 1999. The prize is subject to availability and must be taken on the dates offered. The prize is not transferable and no cash alternative can be offered. Winners will be responsible for their own passports, transfers, insurance and expenses. Normal independent rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

The liberation of Lolita

Emily Prager proves that the best, and deadliest, things come in small packages. By John Walsh

Though her new novel and her collected journalism are published on Monday, Emily Prager's launch party was held last week at the Random House offices in Vauxhall Bridge Road, near Victoria Station in central London. This unpromising location turns out to hold tender memories: "I lived in this road when I was 19," she says, "with my English boyfriend and his room-mate, who were both Old Etonians. They used to go shooting and there'd be these dead pheasants hanging on every doorknob."

Emily Prager was 19 at the time, in 1988, and in the throes of sexual liberation at college. Some way after the feminist meltdown of the Millett-Greer-Steinem years, she made a considerable stir in 1984 with her first collection of stories, *A Visit From the Footbinder*. It announced a talent for black humour elegantly combined with gender malevolence. "The Lincoln-Fruit Anti-Rape Device" watched the progress of the all-female, shaven-headed Foxy Fire platoon as they are dropped over Vietnam dressed as nuns and fitted internally with a penis-shredding implement; the title story was a brilliant study in subtle horror, as a Chinese girl called Pleasure Mouse waits for the arrival of the man who will crush her feet into tiny cones to accommodate the tastes of rich Chinese men.

Prager spent three years of her childhood in Taiwan, living with her Air Force father after her parents' divorce, and there's an Oriental precision about her work. She deals in clever miniatures. Her prose is clipped. Her descriptions of people come encased in pithy details ("I met Bob Guccione once and I've been to the Heifer mansion. What intrigued me was the amount of Tudor furnishing they had in the Tudor aspect of rich men").

Her happiest medium is the 800-word essay. Some of her clever three-page pieces about daily life in Manhattan for the *New York Observer* she describes as "little novels". And she is a decidedly *mignonne* figure herself, sitting in a leather chair at the Gore Hotel, Kensington, a slight, feline, pale-blue-eyed doll in spotty tights, with a very determined chin.

"In a way China is my motherland," she says. "The people really cared for me when I was separated from my mother. It was beautiful, although I lived in a street with open sewers and at the end of it were little children in terrible poverty and distress. But I understood the place. When I went back in 1979, I knew what everyone was talking about, without understanding as the language. It's no accident that my child is Chinese." Lulu Prager is also a miniature, a late arrival in the author's life, now four and a half and at school in Chinatown.

Chinese designs, children, toys and a tiny gun feature in her new work, *Roger Fishbite* (Chatto & Windus, £10), which tells a Lolita-like tale of child abuse and abduction, but from a positive, wised-up 12-year-old's point of view. In this recasting of Nabokov's study of forbidden lust, Lucky Lady Linderhof is no amoral nymph, but a serious and thoughtful kid, quick to spot signs of dodgy adult libido; she swings between love and need for her fishy stepfather as they take to the road, and winds up demonstrating against sex tourism outside the Japanese Embassy and looking for revenge with a pearl-handled shooter.

Prager bristled at my suggestion that the first half of her book amounts to 100 pages



EMILY PRAGER, A BIOGRAPHY

Emily Prager was born in 1949 and brought up in Texas, the Far East and New York's Greenwich Village. Her columns have appeared, since 1974, in *National Lampoon*.

Penhouse, the *New York Observer* and the *New York Times*. Her first collection of short stories, *A Visit From the Footbinder*, was published to critical acclaim in 1984, and was

followed by *Eve's Tattoo* and *Clea and Zeus Divorce*. She currently writes humour and TV criticism for the *Village Voice* and lives in New York with her daughter, Lulu.

of foreplay. "I was trying to show that children are sexy in a way, that they are sexual beings - it only took my daughter one watching of the Spice Girls before she was saying, 'Would you do my hair like this?' and 'Can I have my skirt tighter?' and undulating around the apartment. But it's an adult's responsibility not to act on it. There was no attempt to titillate. And I had no interest in comparing myself to Nabokov. I'm

interested in what Lolita has become - the idea of The Child That Seduces. Lolita was 12. Even if a child has hormones running through its body, even if it's coming on gangbusters to someone, my contention is that they don't know what they're doing."

Running through the novel are three strands of real-life moral contention. Lucky is fascinated by moral talk shows (the kind fronted by Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer,

featuring sex-change revelations, two-timing boyfriends and near-mandatory fist-fights between participants) and dreams of starrng on one herself. "They started as freak shows," says Prager, "then they got kinda interesting with Oprah, and now they're vile, dark, murderous, horrible exhibitionism. I don't know where they get the people on these shows." She is, she says, surrounded by stories of child abuse and

it frightens her for her child. Did she blame the climate of baby beauty contests and pubescent posters? "I don't think you can," she said. "It goes right back to Lewis Carroll, even though he's been exonerated now - though not for me. Most Americans are terrified of strangers grabbing their children in the street one day. But the majority of child kidnappings are by parents in custody battles."

Like Lucky and the rest of America, she has watched the investigation of the murder of JonBenet Ramsey, the tiny beauty queen. In a nice moment of throwaway sophistication, Lucky reflects that none of the girls in her class thought JonBenet's father could have killed her - being familiar with the habits of billionaire stepfathers, they assumed he would have been too busy to be available for murder.

All Emily Prager's responses to questions about her book are practical, non-literary ones, grounded in the real world. Though a stylish writer, she's more interested in ideas and paradoxes than the pleasures of the text. The 700-odd pages of journalism, collected under the title *In the Missionary Position* (Vintage, £8.99), display her talent for conceptual fireworks: they're pungent little satires on masculinity, tough love ("How to Tell if Your Girlfriend is Dying During Rough Sex"), gung-ho politics, national paranoia, social fads like the Safe-T-Man plastic doll ("tricks people into thinking you have the protection of a male guardian") - and President Clinton, about whom she is rather sweetly protective.

"It's interesting: he's done all these things that should turn you against him, yet somehow... American women like this guy because they know he likes women. They know because he doesn't choose only beautiful women to go after. Looks aren't the only thing he's thinking about." But didn't that just mean he was sexually indiscriminate? "I don't think women think of it that way. Clinton didn't behave like a Southern gentleman, but he was no Gary Hart. He did have a real crush on Monica. He'd call her 11 times a day and leave messages on her voicemail. I mean, how naive can you be? But these are little details women pick up."

She is very funny about the idiocy of the male libido - the way, for instance, she noticed men talking directly to her breasts when pregnancy made her bosom larger - and her early days acting in an American soap opera called *On the Edge of Night* in which, "I was always being kidnapped - usually by the same actor."

A very charming and self-assured social commentator is Ms Prager. It's only well into the interview that you discover two key things about her. One, that her mother died only last week and that, for all their long separation, she turns up in all Emily Prager's books. Two, that everything she writes is autobiographical - that Lucky, the abducted 12-year-old, is a junior version of herself, and the dreamy, alcoholic mother is a portrait from life.

Her mother was, it seems, sent on the stage aged eight to support her family after her father died, an appropriation of childhood that Prager talks about with a snarl. Suddenly, her mother and Lucky, and JonBenet Ramsey and Lulu Prager, all seemed to become her children, wrapped together in her wary maternal embrace, warding off the marauders, the paedophiles, the TV freaks, the chilly world of abused kids. In fiction or outside it, Emily Prager has found her métier at last.

COVER STORIES



SLIGHT EMBARRASSMENT at this week's WH Smith soiree to celebrate the shortlist for their 41st Literary Award. With Beryl Bainbridge confined with pleurisy, Alan Bennett poorly, and Julian Barnes and Will Boyd AWOL, it was left to Antony Beevor and Hilary Spurling to carry the flag. Sadly, neither Beevor's *Stalingrad* nor Spurling's *The Unknown Matinee* is available to shoppers at WHS, except for those lucky enough to be able to visit its Sloane Square branch. No one even seemed sure whether the shortlisting would change the situation. Meanwhile, Hatchards alone has sold over 1,000 copies of *Stalingrad* while Beevor's tiny local bookshop, Nomad of Fulham, has sold 100. Small wonder that many people don't consider WHS a bookshop, although chairman Jeremy Hardie this week said he wanted the chain to be seen as "a seller of serious books". But not a serious seller of books.

THE BRITISH Book Awards produced some popular winners on Thursday. Inevitably, Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters* was named Book of the Year. Author of the Year was a recovered Beryl Bainbridge, who received a standing ovation for a speech she said was "written for last year's Booker". JK Rowling and Raymond Briggs also had their moments of triumph. There were puzzling moments, however: Ned Sherrin, introducing Sir Tim Rice, called him "the greatest lyricist of his generation". Discuss.

SEVERAL PUBLISHING folk have written memoirs but, while posterity is assured by the one copy in the British Library, they do not even reach bestseller lists in remainder bookshops. Now, the National Life Story Collection at the BL's National Sound Archive has embarked on a major oral history project, Book Trade Live. They must pick folk with lively minds and long memories so that what emerges is a red-blooded account of fear and loathing in Bloomsbury, detailing who fired, and who slept with, whom.

THE CITY of London is keen to dispel the notion that the closest its workers come to reading anything creative is a set of accounts. Businesses, including accountants KPMG, have joined forces with the Poetry Society to launch Foet in the City. The scheme, part of the National Year of Reading, aims to raise the interest rate in poetry and develop links between business and schools. John Mole, the first official poet of the City, takes up his post later this month; he will run workshops and "drop-in sessions" in schools and offices.

THE LITERATOR

The missionary imposition

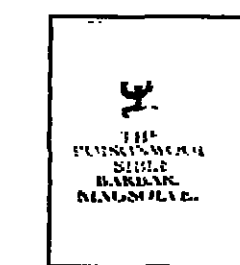
At the end of a novel about misguided charity, the finger-wagging starts.

Enjoy the story, advises Carol Birch, and skip the lessons

WE CAME from Bethlehem, Georgia bearing Betty Crocker cake mixes into the jungle. So begins *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver's brilliant, funny realised epic of one family's journey to the heart of darkness. The year is 1959. Nathan Price, Southern Baptist preacher, takes his wife and four daughters to the village of Kilanga on a mission to convert the Congolese to Christianity. A compelling catastrophe of mutual misunderstanding unfolds.

Nathan, "Our Father," is obsessed with baptising all the children of the village in the river, which, to the Kilangans, is wise to the ways of crocodiles, signifies death. He plants tomatoes and Kentucky Wonder beans, but they cannot be pollinated by exotic African bugs. "Jesus is banyala!" he cries at the end of sermons. *Banyala* ("most precious") spoken with the wrong intonation becomes "poisonwood," the name of a tree that confers a deadly itch.

The preacher's descent into fanatical madness is narrated in turn by each of his four daughters: five-year-old Ruth May, Leah, who loves her father and loves the Kilangans, jive-talking Rachel, who misses her deodorant and hairspray, and lame, speechless Adah, who discovers that "here, bodily damage is more or less con-



The Poisonwood Bible
by Barbara Kingsolver
Faber & Faber, £10.99, 546pp

sidered to be a by-product of living, not a disgrace". Kingsolver gives each her own voice. These are rounded, convincing portraits; we become totally involved with them and their untenable plight, as their father's unsuccessful mission lurches from bad to worse and the family falls foul of almost the entire village, including the Chief and, fatally, the *nganga* or, in the words of the preacher, "what we call a witch doctor".

Against the explosive background of Congolese independence, election and assassination of Patrice Lumumba and coming to power of the dictator Mobutu, the family struggles against worms in the flour, poisonous

snakes, killer ants, illness, starvation and hostile neighbours. News seeps in of the murder of missionaries and violence between blacks and whites. Time to give up, urges the girls' mother. Never, says their father. Jesus will take care of his own. We are heading inexorably for tragedy. When it comes it is desperately moving, an inevitable sacrifice that, like so much of the story to this point, is symbolic without ever being overstated, the culmination of a richly poetic and often harrowing beautiful saga that has not faltered for a moment.

We are now about three-quarters of the way through the book. If only Kingsolver could have left it here, trusting her readers to draw their own conclusions. Instead, in a lengthy coda, she over-eggs a near-perfect pudding by indulging in great swathes of polemic and filling her characters' mouths with outraged moralising.

The points she makes, about the horrors of colonialism and the obscenity of racism, have been made far more effectively by the substance of what went before. Worse, she undermines them by falling into a kind of guilt-induced reverse racism which is obsessed with skin colour. Thus, Leah hopes to "work my skin to darkness," and notes hopefully that "time

erases whiteness altogether".

Identifying the race with the sin, she concludes that Mobutu, black yet oppressive, is really white: "Only the face that shows is black." This is nonsense. It also patronises black people, as does her determination to justify every injustice perpetrated by the Congolese, so that she finds herself making light of female circumcision and the killing of twin babies.

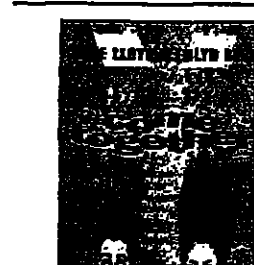
Rachel, whitest and therefore nastiest of the sisters, points out that the King of Abomey slaughtered and enslaved neighbouring tribes. "So," replies Leah, with whom we are clearly meant to identify, "what looks like mass murder to us is probably misinterpreted ritual."

Kingsolver is a great storyteller but she is no philosopher and has a shaky grip on moral relativism. "Everything you're sure is right can be wrong in another place," we are assured, yet she believes passionately in the absolute wrongness of Western imperialism. Leah wants to make "something right in at least one tiny corner of the vast house of wrongs," to give her father "the simple human relief of knowing you've done wrong". This is confused and contradictory. Read the book for the sheer power of the story. Skip the lectures.

YOU CAN win awards for the best novel of the year, best first novel, even best second novel, but if there were an award for the Deal of the Year, then *Come Together* would win it hands down. Josie Lloyd and Emlyn Rees, authors of one previous novel each, had the sparkly notion of writing a novel together but separately. It would be a love story in alternating chapters with Lloyd telling it from the girl's point of view and Rees from the boy's.

This is far from being "the first novel to tell both sides of the story" as the blurb puts it. Samuel Richardson's masterpiece, *Clarissa*, made devastating use of the technique in the middle of the 18th century, in the form of letters that Clarissa and the rake Lovelace wrote to confidants.

Still, the structure has a certain novelty value and the authors have been shrewder still. The story is, needless to say, boy meets girl, but it's not just any boy and any girl. There is an apparently insatiable craving for Bridget Jones-like and Nick Hornby-like books. What if you had Bridget and Nick in the same book? What if you had a girl trying to cut down on cigarettes, worrying about her weight, frustrated in her job and desperate for a man meeting a guy who is all laddish and



Come Together
by Josie Lloyd and
Emlyn Rees
Arrow, £5.99, 292pp

having lots of affairs but this facade, this fear of commitment, just hides an intense capacity for emotion?

The pastiche is so cheerfully brazen as to be rather endearing. On the first page of Josie Lloyd's first chapter, Amy Rees is staring in the bathroom mirror on page two she describes herself as a warbling and on the phone to her best mate; on page three she's worried about not having sex for six months (with a joke about her hymen growing back that is funny, but I think Kathy Lett made it first), and on page four she's smoking a cigarette, having given up for 20 minutes. Emlyn Rees's style as Jack

Rossiter is Nick Hornby behaving badly with a touch of early Martin Amis. The first sex scene between Jack and Amy could politely be described as a detailed homage to the first sex scene between Charles and Rachel in Amis's *The Rachel Papers*.

The story is just Mills and Boon with grunge veneer. Jack and Amy meet, have sex, gradually fall in love, though Jack has difficulty in expressing this because he's a bloke and scared of commitment. But just at the moment when he's acknowledging his feelings, enter Bad Girl, who provokes him into a very peculiar act of forced infidelity. He confesses and Amy breaks off with him. Both are heartbroken and the question in the final chapters is whether love can find a way.

The reason I am reviewing this book is that I have written collaborative novels myself, with my wife Nicci Gerrard, under the inspired pen-name of Nicci French. Obviously, we write completely different kinds of books. Nicci and I are trying for a single, seamless narrative, and we're happiest when we hear from readers who didn't even know that Nicci French is a non-existent schizophrenic hermaphrodite.

The point of *Come Together* is for the narrative voices to

clash and contradict. Readers should not expect any tricky narrative games; this isn't *Rashomon*. Jack tells a certain part of the story; then Amy takes it over for a while, then Jack continues.

One fairly amusing transition happens right in the middle of the first sex scene, but for the most part it is remarkable how little the authors exploit the comic possibilities of the form. "He can't read his mind. She can't read his," the blurb promises. You expect misinterpretations, partial explanations, prudent deceptions, but the comedy largely consists of one character not knowing something about the other, then knowing it.

This is not a book that does anything more than tell you things about men and women you've read elsewhere. It flatters its main characters and reassures its readers, but there's a cheerfulness even about its third-handedness. *Come Together* reads as if it were a laugh to write, but that's not necessarily a compliment.

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED
Fiction, Non-Fiction, Biography, Memoirs,
Poetry, Children's
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED
WRITE OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO
MINERVA PRESS
2 OLD BRIMPTON RD, LONDON SW9 2DD

Life member of the gaucho club

Borges bewitched the world with his fables, but readers – and translators – should remember his roots, argues Jason Wilson

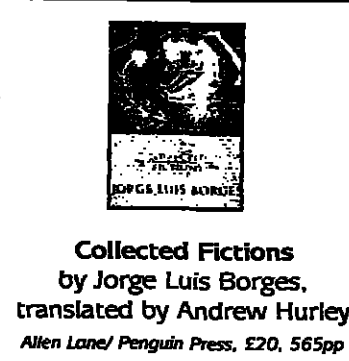
To celebrate the centenary of Jorge Luis Borges (who was born in Buenos Aires on the 24 August 1896), the Penguin estate and Viking Penguin have commissioned this new translation of his "fictions" from Andrew Hurley. To have all Borges's stories and parables in one hefty volume can only be a good thing, but why re-translate them?

These quirky intellectual teases caught on, remarkably, in the 1960s, first in the US and then Britain, in the wake of an earlier French discovery. They formed part of the commercial blossoming of Latin American fiction in the heyday of Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution. Borges was then misread as a magical realist: as unlikely as the cover, based on a painting called "Havana", which adorns the clever anthology called *Labyrinths* that Penguin launched in 1970. It was unlikely because Borges was always conservative, and silly in his political views.

In subtle ways, *Labyrinths* created a false Borges by stripping him of his Buenos Aires roots. His first published books were poems celebrating his return to his native city after seven years in Europe, along with an idiosyncratic biography of a minor suburban poet. Borges was so fascinated by the paradoxes of Buenos Aires cosmopolitanism that he wrote essays in a refashioned creole Spanish, and loved imitating the ways street-toughs talked. But the writer who wrote mind-twisting story-essays blurring genres, mocking realism and psychology – and who appeared so cunningly modern that he was bracketed with Samuel Beckett when both won the Prix Formentor in 1961 – became the author the world now knows as Borges.

Mainly for political and class reasons, this Borges has had few detractors abroad (Vladimir Nabokov excepted), and many at home in Buenos Aires. His fictional world still strikes me as narrow and limited, with few moving human relationships, no sex, little about women and weak plots. This is a world as odd, and as bookish, as the man himself.

In the 1970s, readers had to turn to several further translations to reach the whole writer, especially those by Anthony Kerrigan and Norman Thomas di Giovanni. Here, for the first time in English, is all of Borges the story-writer. Will he catch on



again, as he did in 1970, and is the new translation justified by the poverty of the previous ones?

First, the Borges who emerges in this volume struck me as more varied than I expected, with work spanning the years from 1935 to 1983. But, for an author who famously derided length as padding ("the madness of composing vast books – setting out in 500 pages an idea that can be perfectly related orally in five minutes"), there is something worrying about this brick of a book. Could it fuel a mistaken belief that this complete Borges is the same Borges who stunned so many readers and writers? (His roll-call of admirers runs from Michel Foucault to George Steiner, Salman Rushdie and Carlos Fuentes, though few followed his conclusion.)

In fact, the Borges who counts is the author of two slim volumes: *Fictions* (1944) and *The Aleph* (1949). This decade of creativity, for a lazy writer who preferred reading, started when Borges wanted to prove to himself that his mind still worked after an accident. It changed our awareness of literature: within Latin American writing, there is a clear pre- and post-Borges style of self-awareness and irony.

But this short outburst was not maintained. Even Borges himself became annoyed with the fame of these despairing and vivid parables. In 1974, he closed his complete works in Spanish with a mock obituary that omitted these two volumes; he often quipped that he was first a reader, then a poet, and only lastly a story-teller.

So this new book blends in several further Borges to the essential writer of the

1940s. There is the Borges who loved parody, and who defined his *A Universal History of Iniquity* (1938) as "the irresponsible sport of a silly sort of man who could not bring himself to write short stories". This vein continued with his mock detective works, written in collaboration with his friend Adolfo Bioy Casares.

Then there is the Borges who had turned blind by the 1960s and was coaxed back into writing by his translator and editor Norman Thomas di Giovanni, a process that led to *Brodie's Report* (1970), published an amazing 21 years after *The Aleph*, and *The Book of Sand* (1983). These stories have little bite: the rigour of thought is lost and the syntax loose, simply because Borges was blind and could not think and correct himself as he wrote. Had Borges only written these later stories he would not have become "Borges".

Then there are the sincere poet and the witty, anachronistic essayist. Such a confusion of different Borgeses is noted by the master himself in his self-mocking parable about fame called "Borges and I". It concludes, slightly awkwardly in Hurley's version, "I am not sure which of us it is that's writing this page". (Compare di Giovanni's "Which of us is writing this page I don't know".)

Why re-translate all these uneven Borgeses and not edit the best into a revamped *Labyrinths*? Here, there's a behind-the-scenes clash between translator's rights and literary estates, and a mistaken, even mercenary, attempt to bring out the "real" Borges by suppressing previous translations.

I have carefully checked Andrew Hurley's new versions with earlier ones and with Borges's own Argentine Spanish. Look, for example, at Borges's own favourite, fantasy-autobiographical story "The South", about an accident, a fever and a doomed, imagined duel with a pampas gaucho. Hurley, who lives in Puerto Rico, misrepresents the basic country word *cusco* as "shell of a large country house" (as did Anthony Kerrigan, a previous translator). It simply means the main house and outhouses of country estates (*estancias*). Another common word, *hacienda*, meaning cattle, becomes "pastures". Kerrigan had "ranches", which it can mean, but not in Argentina.

In the end, a pattern emerges of mis-



In 1955, the ghost of Evita rules the Buenos Aires of dictator Juan Peron, whom Borges always detested AP

translations of words with specific Argentine associations. Some of the translator's useful notes are also imprecise.

Another trait is to fill out or explain. For instance, an "old" house in the Spanish becomes a "ramshackle" old house. Yet Borges was tough on himself about such padding.

All this might simply be the kind of erudition that Borges mocked. It is not intended to be a slur on Hurley who often reads well in English. But it touches on what is unique about Borges: that unex-

pected oscillation between local and universal knowledge. Through a plethora of biographies, Borges is being read today in the Hispanic world as a very *porteño* (someone living in the port of Buenos Aires) writer – one soaked in Argentine culture but open, crankily, to the outer world, at least in a literary way.

An opportunity has been missed to include the best translations of the best Borges – the alert, quirky writer of his middle crisis in the 1940s – in a volume that would ensure that he remained canonical.

He may do so, of course, but not in this format, which cannot be smuggled into a pocket and which contradicts what Hurley succinctly calls Borges's "laconic terseness". A last, pedantic note: the first translation of Borges into English was not, as Hurley affirms, in 1948. In 1942, Robert Fitzgerald translated poems in a *New Directions* anthology; and in 1945, Paul Bowles also presciently translated Borges.

Jason Wilson teaches in the Spanish Department at University College, London

Hard lines from the bitter bard

SOMETIME VERY soon, Tony Blair will cast a busy eye over the names just proposed to him as candidates for Poet Laureate: Carol Ann Duffy, Tony Harrison, Seamus Heaney and Andrew Motion. This odd rigmarole, whereby the PM chooses from a preselected shortlist, exactly mirrors the appointment of bishops in the Church of England. Yet the most purely episcopal figure in British poetry hardly made the initial gossip, let alone the final cut.

Geoffrey Hill's new book-length, 150-section poem, *The Triumph of Love* (Penguin, £8.99), caps a career that began in 1959, when this police constable's son from deep in the Archers country of Worcestershire published his first collection, *For the Unfulfilled*. Hill's academic career has since taken him from Leeds via Cambridge to Boston, but those middle-English benchmarks do point to his work's foundations. Ted Hughes aside, no poet since the Eliot of *Four Quartets* has dug deeper into a mystical ideal of Englishness revealed in religion, literature and landscape. And no poet since the Pound of the *Cantos* has played more savagely the

brutish modern life that saps the faith and mind of "a nation" with so many memorials but no memory".

Its title taken from Petrarch, *The Triumph of Love* mingles an appeal to the Blessed Virgin on behalf of our bloodstained century with much vituperative satire and an elegy for the ineffable losses of the Holocaust and the Flanders trenches. Sometimes, the tone lightens into flashes of childhood memoir, with scabrously funny bursts of self-analysis. The poet portrays himself as a "rancorous, narcissistic old sod" – half Jeremiah, half Alf Garnett. His imagination a "kermesse of wrath and resentment", he upsets a forgetful present with guilty memories.

Knotted, dense, but harshly comic, Hill makes no concessions to dumbed-down modernity ("these strange children/ pitiless in their ignorance and contempt") with the vast range of his allusions. In this company, "Benn" will signify the German poet Gottfried, not Tony. Throughout, however, a bemused editor-figure ("ED") stands in for the sceptical reader and even glosses a few of the more abstruse

A WEEK IN BOOKS

BOYD TONKIN
The Bishop of Poetry delivers a great sermon

passages. Yet Hill's lines prickie with a salty slang, and he often dives into a much more demotic mode. Even Grade Fields turns up in one of several Second World War fragments. "She and her armed/ aspistras, last off the beaches".

His satirical voice is sharp and knowing; it will not take much sleuthing to identify "N. and N.", those "worthless" contemporary poets made "Swedish millionaires" (by the Nobel Prize?). And when Hill snipes at "the legends that now circulate/ about Canary Wharf, the

Isle of Dogs" (where I type these lines), we poor hacks can be sure that yes, he does mean us, as we hasten the time's ruin with our "entertainment overkill".

Half-smothered by this acrimony, yet sprouting like stray flowers in asphalt, Hill's lyric gift makes itself felt now and again. Then, some heart-stopping cadence distilled from the landscapes of his youth will recall the best of Pound: "The common/ elm – *ulmus procera* – also gone/ under, with the shires; though deer/ are cared for, and the rare white cattle; as/ is memory in this tranche of frozen sunlight".

For Hill, as for all the backward-glancing Modernists who descend from Eliot and Pound, the rot began centuries ago. He notes that "mob" and "fun" came in at the same time: in the late 17th century, Eliot's date for a "dissociation of sensibility" that wrecked the Church – and the verse – of England. Take this sacramental politics seriously (which nobody, thank heavens, does), and you might end up advocating an Anglican Taliban with croziers and chasubles – and *auto-da-fés* on the village green.

Theocracy, Hill knows, is hardly on the cards. He spots every hellish pitfall of such nostalgia – more so than Eliot, who failed to square the Holocaust's reality with his lofty Christian ideal. Hill, in contrast, never takes his grieving eye off that flame. His poetry merely hopes to give "a sad and angry consolation".

"The odds/ are against High Prophecy", Hill understands. It beggars all belief to imagine a poet of his finesse and asperity lauding the nuptials of some Windsor princeling. No matter: *The Triumph of Love* counts as one of the finest long works from a postwar poet in England. (Not the finest, perhaps; in my view, Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts* stands alone.) Hill takes us on a death-shadowed walk, down "a cinder-path by the old scythe-works", from the Black Country to Buchenwald and beyond. Along the way, glimpses of unearthly beauty mix with ashen mourning, acrid rage and a spatter of sour jokes. Follow him, with a keen ear and an open mind, and "There will be no quarrel between us – all this time – / a light rain unceasing, the moist woods/ full of wild garlic".

ERRATA by FELIX BENNETT

MARGARET'S
HOW TO COOK
THE FOREIGN SECRETARY

CONTAINS A GREAT RECIPE FOR STUFFED ROBIN.

Feasting on stale bread and blown roses

Women want more than this self-regarding froth, says Ann Treneman

ERICA JONG'S collection of non-fiction essays has a sub-heading that seeks to answer the question in its title: "Power, Sex, Bread and Roses". Now this may be a bit hackneyed, but it could have worked. Naomi Wolf introduces Erica Jong as "one of the major American voices of the century" and the author says that she has been ruthless in editing her "non-fiction meditations" for this book.

To which I can only answer: not ruthless enough. The publisher and Wolf should have known better, but Erica Jong cannot get off so lightly. She wrote this thing and should be embarrassed to have done so. She can be blamed.

Fear of Flying was a great book: funny, wild, sexy. Fem-

What Do Women Want?
by Erica Jong
Bloomsbury, £14.99, 202pp

nism can be so fussy. Here was a blast of fresh air. That was more than 20 years ago, however, and time has been pernicious for Erica Jong. She

seems to have come to believe in herself in a thoroughly unhealthy way. She is the centre of her – and now our – universe.

The book begins with a look at the power-struggle between the sexes over the past 25 years. In fact, the essays on Hillary Clinton, Louise Woodward and so on are a toe-dip in this direction. They are patchy. Arguments mutate into observations, and vice versa.

The rest of the book is divided into sections on sex and "bread and roses". This latter contains her recipe "for remaining sane". The ingredients are Italy, poetry and her house.

Here the vertical pronoun and the ego become cloying to the point of stickiness. Take this passage from the "Books and Houses": "Fay Weldon was recently my houseguest for a weekend. Quite early Sunday morning, after a cup of tea, she vanished back to the guest room without saying a word... 'Shh,' I said to my husband. 'Fay must be writing.' 'Shh,' Fay's friend said to me. 'She's writing.' I puttered around the kitchen feeling a delicious sense of anticipation. It was almost as good as writing myself.

"It was as if the house were

writing. Everyone felt the frisson of creativity."

The book has its moments. Some of her asides are very good and the essay on the perfect man is funny and perceptive. Her ideas on pornography are interesting but, even here, you end up cringing. The essay on Henry Miller starts off promisingly by describing his attachment to the word "shit". She then sentimentalises it, saying that in his mouth the word became clean. "He purified the excrement of life and made it roses."

The essay is not really about Miller at all. It seems that he

was very taken with *Fear of Flying*. The result was "a torrent of applause, enthusiasm, and unpaid agency". She was bowled over and looked him up when she went to California. His house became a refuge.

She was one of many visitors, some more noble than others. "Now and then he copied a feel – though not of my breasts. I was not his physical type at all (the adored Asian women) or maybe he thought of me as too bookish, for he always made a great point of how literary I was." The essay ends with the message, *o la Hallmark*: "I hope you get your Nobel Prize in heaven. Henry sent up on blasts of dynamite."

Egregious. What do women want? Not this.

THE arts GUILD

Are you looking for a spot of culture?

see page 32 of
The Independent Magazine

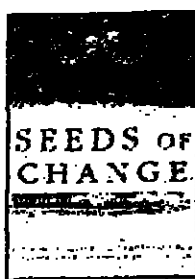
PAPERBACKS

BY EMMA HAGESTADT AND CHRISTOPHER HIRST

The Greatest Benefit to Mankind

by Roy Porter
Fontana, £14.99, 833pp

PORTER'S EPIC braids together the history of medicine with an account of how disease exploited man's restless motion round the planet. Typhus entered Europe with the Crusades, while Columbus "unleashed the worst health disaster" ever. As preventative medicine, Cicero's advice from the 1st century BC sounds uncannily familiar: "Take moderate exercise and just enough food to restore strength". In a prescient view of psycho-spiritualism, Porter notes it "uncannily echoes the victim-blaming doctrines of the moral majority". Feeling well, Mr Hoddie?



Blind Date

by Frances Fyfield
Corgi, £5.99, 413pp

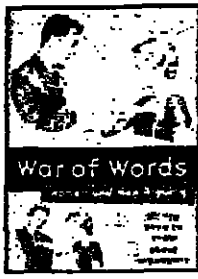
LIKE CHARACTERS in a PD James novel, Frances Fyfield heroine's aren't like anyone you've ever met. The central character of her latest murder mystery is Elisabeth Kennedy, a disgraced ex-police officer who lives alone in a converted London bell-tower. Confronted from two traumas: the death of her beautiful younger sister, followed by a life-threatening accident of her own, Elisabeth relies on best friend Fatsy. While Fatsy regales her with stories of her dating adventures, Elisabeth awaits another gentleman caller - her sister's killer. London's lonely hearts get lonelier.



Seeds of Change

by Henry Hobhouse
Papermac, £12, 381pp

NEWLY EXPANDED, this classic work explores the far-reaching impact of quinine, sugar, tea, cotton, the potato and now the coca plant. A wonderful read, provocative and well-informed. Pursuing the story of cocaine, Hobhouse notes: 1) Distances in the Andes were measured by the coca - how long it took to chew a quantity of coca leaves; 2) The success of Coca-Cola, which once "undoubtedly contained cocaine", partly stems from its popularity as a post-coital douche (users maintain neither Diet Coke nor Pepsi are as efficacious); 3) All Hollywood knew that Popeye's "spinach" was cocaine.



Leaving Earth

by Helen Humphreys
Bloomsbury, £6.99, 214pp

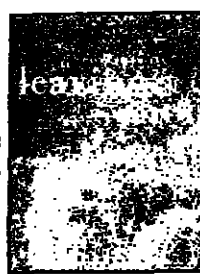
BASED ON actual events in the Thirties, Canadian poet Helen Humphreys tells the story of female aviators Grace O'Gorman and Wills Briggs, who fly over Toronto in an attempt to set a new endurance record. Set largely in the cockpit of a small Tiger Moth, you keep reading to see how the author will keep the women's relationship, and the reader's interest, airborne over 25 days. The novel's breathtaking descriptions of Canada's open spaces, and even wider skies, are grounded in plenty of authentic-sounding aeronautical know-how (and the logistics of excreting at high altitude).



A Recipe for Bees

by Gail Anderson-Dargatz
Virago, £9.99, 311pp

SET IN rural British Columbia, Gail Anderson-Dargatz's second novel reads like a candy-floss version of Carol Shields's *The Stone Diaries*. Switching between a *Little House on the Prairie*-like past, and more comfortable present, the book tells the story of Augusta Olsen, married at 18 and left to repent in leisure. It's only when she resurrects her mother's bee-keeping equipment that life on the range starts to buzz with possibilities: 60 years on she's still harvesting the benefits. Well-written boku: the reader's only stumbling block is sorting out Olafs from Olsens.



Culture of Complaint

by Robert Hughes
Harvill, £6.99, 177pp

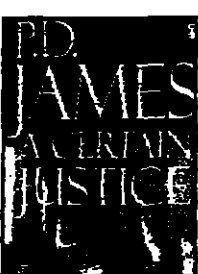
A FIERCELY articulated, if somewhat rambling polemic against the dictatorship of the *bien-pensants*, particularly those with academic tenure. Hughes rails against PC language ("the old American love of euphemism"), while noting that "the old division of left and right has come to look more like two Puritan sects". He is telling on his home turf of the art-world, attacking would-be censors of the right, but reserving his bitterest words for the museum directors who beatified Jean-Michel Basquiat. Bracing stuff, but sometimes Hughes indulges in invective at the cost of clarity.



A Certain Justice

by PD James
Penguin, £5.99, 482pp

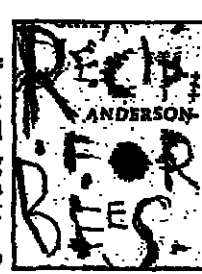
THE CONFIDENT manner in which the first victim is announced in the first sentence (though the event does not take place until page 130), the limpid prose, the taut construction - all confirm that a titan of the murder genre is on peak form. James uses the musty milieu of Middle Temple to excellent effect. There is an ample supply of suspects when the body of QC Venetia Aldridge is discovered by her clerk: "What met his eyes was so bizarre in its horror that he stood rooted in disbelief...". Commander Dalgliesh negotiates a legal labyrinth, its morality as murky as the gaslit alleyways.



War of Words: women and men arguing

by Elizabeth Mapstone
Vintage, £7.99, 360pp

IGNORE THE ludicrous cover puff ("all you need to know about arguments to win"). Based on the immodestly named Mapstone Argument Questionnaire (MAQ), the author surveys 57 varieties of arguments, from lovers' tiffs and family feuds to bust-ups with bosses. Though she argues against stereotyping, Mapstone still sends round her "old-fashioned, gentlemanly" husband to sort out disputes with neighbours. She says happy couples "relate to each other as individuals rather than as representatives of the other sex". Surely an element of *vive la difference* is central to heterosexual partnerships?



SPOKEN WORD

CHRISTINA HARDYMENT



Amsterdam
read by Alan Bates
HarperCollins
5hrs 30mins, £9.99

IAN MCEWAN'S Booker Prize-winning novella *Amsterdam* takes to spoken word like a duck to water, not least because it is so short that no abridgement was needed to fit it on to four cassette tapes. It is the story of the consequences for three high-flyers of their very different liaisons with the woman with whose untimely death the story opens. The plot, which McEwan unfolds with the consummate skill of a conjuror, is playfully topical in its portrayals of a candidate for prime minister, a broadsheet newspaper editor and an eminent musician struggling with a millennium composition. Alan Bates, his voice gruffly wry and authoritative, is the perfect choice as reader.



Science and Discovery
Newton, Darwin, Einstein
Simon & Schuster
9hrs, £20

ENLIGHTENMENT TAPES are finding their feet as a novel and easily assimilable medium of education and self-improvement. This particular set is an excellent introduction for ignorant arts-trained minds like my own to Newton, Darwin and Einstein. Each pair of cassettes introduces the great men biographically, sets their ideas in context and explains their lasting value. They are also richly furnished with contemporary comment - John Donne on Copernicus, for example. Although I found presenter Edwin Newman's important intonation a shade soporific - Mr Chips on a Friday afternoon - the generous sprinkling of quotations read in other voices makes the overall effect bouncey upbeat.

Fear and loathing from Newmarket to Las Vegas

Is it a novel? Is it a memoir? Laura Thompson hedges her bets but appreciates some good value from this wayward punter's odyssey



Twelve Grand
by Jonathan Rendall
Yellow Jersey Press, £10, 250pp

THIS IS a clever book, with a vulnerable heart inside its tough outer shell. It is far better than it would have been had it obeyed its original brief: that Jonathan Rendall's £12,000 advance should be spent entirely on gambling, and that the book should be an account of those bets. It is a nifty-sounding idea, but one that could have produced nothing more substantial than an extended exercise in journalistic vignettes of betting shops, casinos, Vegas, Newmarket, while the writer excites himself but not his readers as he commits frothage with the low-lifers of the gambling world. Rendall gives us something more

interesting. His book deals in many smoke-stained clichés, but seen through an artistic eye. He purports to be telling his story: that of a sickly, struggling writer-journalist who gambles his £12,000 while reliving events from his past. However, at the end he reveals that everything - apart from the bets - is a fiction and that "Jonathan Rendall" is a persona. This has a disorientating effect - even though we may have guessed it - as the feeling persists that some of the "fiction" is very much truth. Indeed, the other Jonathan feels like his creator's alter ego: the person, perhaps, whose presence many writer-journalists dread to ac-

knowledge in themselves, the "freelancer" still chasing demeaning assignments in his mid-thirties, disappointed and alcoholic and grumpy susceptible to the "significance" of a winning or (far more likely) losing a bet. *Twelve Grand* is this poor generic bastard's life story. Some passages are more successful than others. The opening, in a doctor's surgery, is absolutely cracking. So too is the childhood description of watching the Derby - "Mill Reef was rolling his head as though he was laughing" - although someone should have noticed that even the fictional Rendall cannot have backed Mill Reef, who won in

1971, the year before he backed Nijinsky, who won in 1970. The account of a love affair with an elusive table dancer, pursued from New Orleans to Las Vegas, is far more convincing that it might have been. However, some of the other characters fail to come to life, and the narrative voice does not always live up to its own standards of crisp subtlety. The tired and emotional telegraphese - "Run out of G. Pills. Don't replenish. Mimi wait or nothing" - moves dangerously close to *Bridget Jones* territory. The looming influence of Martin Amis upon modern male prose ("Went through half the Cuba and chained a few

fags") sometimes makes the Rendall persona seem like a straight amalgam of John Self and Richard Tull. On the whole, *Twelve Grand* convinces. The descriptions of the bets ring hilariously true: "No winners but old, see why Walter tipped them. Value runs all the way. Two thirds and another second." Gamblers never mind losing if they get "value". Strong, simple phrases bring the book to vivid life. And there is, beneath the tricks, a sad honesty which makes you wish that Rendall had completely cut the cord which ties his book to its self-conscious devices, and plunged even more deeply into the difficult waters of fiction.



The twilight world of the betting shop John Rasmussen

She took their word
They took \$50 million
and her life

SABIN WILLETT
THE BETRAYAL

A gut-grabber of a thriller
Lorenzo Carcaterra,
bestselling author of *Sleepers*

£10
HARDBACK

OUT NOW IN ALL
GOOD BOOKSHOPS

www.randomhouse.co.uk

BESTSELLERS

Sales of Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters* have been boosted yet again by the award of another literary prize - the prestigious Whitbread Book of the Year, which he won for an unprecedented second year running. (He had already

won the Whitbread Poetry Award, the TS Eliot and Forward Prizes.) Poetry outselling *Men Are From Mars...* and *Della* - not a bad start to the year. The Whitbread effect (plus a little light modelling?) has also helped to make

Amanda Foreman's life of that 18th-century Spencer, *Georgiana*, the bestselling hardback biography. Compiled from sales over seven days ending 31 January 1999 © Bookwatch Ltd, 1999

ORIGINAL FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	PRICE	WEEKLY SALES
1 (2) <i>Southern Cross</i>	Patricia D Cornwell (Little, Brown)	£16.99	2,124
2 (4) <i>Powerplays: ruthless com</i>	Tom Clancy (Penguin)	£5.99	1,764
3 (-) <i>The Death of Amy Parris</i>	T R Bowen (Penguin)	£5.99	1,589
4 (-) <i>It Means Mischief</i>	Kate Thompson (Bantam)	£5.99	1,467
5 (-) <i>Liar Birds</i>	Lucy Fitzgerald (Black Swan)	£5.99	1,458
6 (3) <i>Tiffany's Secret Diary</i>	Kate Lock (BBC)	£4.99	1,167
7 (1) <i>City Girl</i>	Patricia Scanlan (Bantam)	£5.99	1,100
8 (7) <i>Churchill's People</i>	Mary Jane Staples (Corgi)	£5.99	989
9 (-) <i>Come Together</i>	Josie Lloyd & Emily Rees (Arrow)	£5.99	953
10 (5) <i>Ramsey 5</i>	Christian Jacq (Simon & Schuster)	£9.99	857

ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	PRICE	WEEKLY SALES
1 (8) <i>Birthday Letters</i>	Ted Hughes (Faber)	£14.99	4,306
2 (1) <i>Men Are From Mars...</i>	John Gray (Thorsons)	£8.99	3,432
3 (2) <i>Della's How to Cook</i>	Della Smith (BBC)	£16.99	2,829
4 (3) <i>Little Book of Feng Shui</i>	Lillian Too (Element)	£1.99	2,511
5 (4) <i>The Little Book of Calm</i>	Paul Wilson (Penguin)	£1.99	1,883
6 (5) <i>Seafood Odyssey</i>	Rick Stein (BBC)	£18.99	1,709
7 (9) <i>Notes From a Big Country</i>	Bill Bryson (Doubleday)	£16.99	1,657
8 (6) <i>Low Fat Cookbook</i>	Rosemary Conley (Century)	£16.99	1,608
9 (10) <i>StationX: codebreakers</i>	Michael Smith (Channel 4)	£14.99	1,581
10 (-) <i>The Tutankhamun Prophecies</i>	Maurice Cottrell (Headline)	£18.99	1,363

BIOGRAPHY

TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	PRICE	WEEKLY SALES
1 <i>Angela's Ashes</i>	Frank McCourt (Flamingo)	£7.99	3,585
2 <i>A Kenish Lad</i>	Frank Muir (Corgi)	£7.99	1,843
3 <i>Georgiana</i>	Amanda Foreman (HarperCollins)	£20	1,019
4 <i>The Diving Bell</i>	Jean-Dominique Bauby (Fourth Estate)	£5.99	780
5 <i>The Gun'nor</i>	Lenny McLean (Blake)	£14.99	743
6 <i>Falling Leaves</i>	Adeline Yen Mah (Penguin)	£6.99	725
7 <i>My Autobiography</i>	Dickie Bird (Coronet)	£6.99	636
8 <i>Iris Murdoch: a memoir</i>	John Bayley (Duckworth)	£16.95	600
9 <i>Losing My Virginity</i>	Richard Branson (Virgin)	£20	558
10 <i>Things Can Only Get Better</i>	John O'Farrell (Doubleday)	£9.99	549

INSPIRATIONS
NOVELIST A S BYATT

The play
Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. It's a passionate play about intellectual thinking, sex and politics. It's got everything - the play in which Shakespeare argued things out. There are greater plays but this one moves me because of the quality of the thought.

The artwork
Matisse's *Red Studio* which is in the MOMA in New York. It moves me because it's an image of the inside your head when you are arranging your thoughts. Every time I go to look at it, which is every time I go to New York, I stand in front of it to see if I've remembered it right and more and more frequently my memory image corresponds with the reality, but never quite, so it's always a shock.

The film
I'm not a great film person. The film that I love the most is *The Seven Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa. I've just been in Japan and the Japanese say that it's a Western film made in Japan. I think it is the combination of a Western style of drama and Japanese emotion - it's one of the very few films where I forget anything except watching the emotions of the people.

The place
Flyby Bay on the North Yorkshire coast between Scarborough and Bridlington. We spent our summer holidays there as children, before and immediately after the war. I've tried to write about other seashores but they always get transmuted into that one because that is my image of where the land meets the sea. It's also the place where Charlotte Brontë first saw the sea.

The music
Given the choice, I prefer silence to music but *Das Rheingold* by Wagner makes me both think and feel passionately. I've always been obsessed by Norse mythology. Wagner said that there had to be one note to each word. The words that Wagner wrote are in a way as important as the music. I dislike the words inspired and creative: I think influence is a much better word. The form and the content of all these things causes me to think about the nature of thinking and writing.

A S Byatt's 'Elementals' is published by Chatto, £12

COUNTRY & GARDEN



It's not just wild animals that are in danger of extinction - plants are also under threat. Join the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens to save rare blooms such as the camellia. Neil Jay/A-Z Botanical

Forget whales, save the conradina

It's time to turn over a new leaf and help conserve some of the 34,000 plant species threatened with extinction. By Anna Pavord

You can scarcely think of a whale now without mentally adding the words "Save the" in front of it. Pandas and gorillas are equally potent symbols of the need for conservation in the animal world. But how many people are equally concerned to save the conradina, or the ramosmania, or the nesocodon - or any other of the 34,000 different plants that are currently threatened with extinction?

"Not enough," says Kerry Walter, who for several years headed the Threatened Plant Unit at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge. The database he built up provided much of the underpinning for the recently published Red List of plants that are in danger of disappearing for ever.

In the garden we would think it strange to chuck a plant on to the compost heap before we had seen what it could do for us by way of leaf, flower, fruit or scent. But that is what we are allowing to happen to plants in the wild. They are disappearing before we have even had a chance to record their potential.

Unfortunately, gardeners are part of the problem. Dr Walter quotes some grim stories about plants that have been completely stripped from their native habitats to cater to the whims of an orchid-grower or a camellia-fancier. In 1895, Carl Johnson wrote from Colombia to the firm that employed him as a

collector. Orchids, he assured them, "are extinguished in this spot. I have finished all along the Rio Dagua where there are no plants left." To leave plants behind would be to play into the hands of rivals. We can help by asking awkward

questions about where our plants come from and how they have been produced. Traceability is a key word among those who supply food to our supermarkets. There is no reason why the principle should not apply in the nursery trade, too.

But does it matter that a plant is disappearing in the wild, if it is alive and kicking in our gardens? Yes, it does. Generally, a gardener's eye will be drawn to a clone that has bigger flowers than the norm, or brighter berries, or a more elegant

habit, or better coloured foliage. A plant's appearance is what interests us. But cloning of this sort does little for genetic diversity. The plant with the bigger flowers may not have such a robust constitution as the straight species from which it has been selected. Somebody needs to care for the uglier ducklings too. They may be the redemptory swans of the future.

"Gardeners have the potential to be an enormously effective force for good," says Dr Walter, "but they

must not run away with the idea that because they have one endangered plant in their back garden, they have solved the problem. Better to have it there than not have it anywhere else in the world, of course, but one plant, on its own, does not add up to the survival of a species."

So what can we do, I asked Dr Walter? Think positive, he said. "The ship may be taking in water, but it hasn't sunk yet. It's not too late to save many of these threatened plants, but salvation is more likely to come about by group effort than by individual action." A lone gardener can rarely grow enough plants in sufficient isolation to ensure that the seed will be pure.

Instead, join the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, which has groups all over the country. Understand the importance of records. A plant without a provenance is a book with no words. Support organisations working specifically to conserve plants. Dr Walter points out that there are seven times as many threatened plants as threatened animals, but in the US, for instance, only 3 per cent of funds available for conservation is spent on plants. The rest goes on animals.

So save the camellia and think - only another 33,999 plants to go.

Send donations to Botanic Gardens Conservation International, De Canoso House, 199 Kew Road, London TW9 3BW (0181-332 5953)

TEN GARDEN PLANTS IN DANGER IN THE WILD

Abelophyllum distichum: Known only in Korea, where it has a limited natural range. A slow-growing shrub, related to the forsythia family. The February flowers are white, tinged with pink. Not showy, but scented. Does best in sun. Endangered in the wild but available from Burncoose & South Down Nurseries, Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ (1209 861112).

Berberidopsis corallina (coral plant): Native of Chile, where commercial forestry threatens its habitats. A beautiful, evergreen, twining climber, not reliably hardy, with dark, leathery leaves and hanging clusters of deep red flowers from summer through to autumn. Needs shelter and almost complete shade. Endangered in the wild but available from PW Plants, Sunnyside, Heath Road, Kenninghall, Norfolk NR16 2DS (01953 888212).

Camellia reticulata: Introduced to this country from China in 1820, and since over-collected by zealous plant-hunters. A spectacular wall shrub in the milder counties of Britain. Large flowers of soft rose-crimson among the evergreen leaves. Vulnerable in the wild, but still available from Greenway Gardens, Churston Ferrers, Brixham, Devon TQ5 0ES (01803 842382).

Cilanthus puniceus (lobster claw): A New Zealand native, but the introduction of sheep and cattle to the islands has pushed its survival to the limit. Handsome, but tender and (except in the mildest areas) suitable only for conservatories. Fine, pinnate foliage and clusters of large, scarlet flowers, curved like a parrot's beak. Endangered in the wild, but available from The Conservatory, Gomshall, Surrey GU5 9LB (01483 203019).

Cosmos atrosanguineus: Once a native of Mexico, now a darling of the herbaceous border, with its dark maroon-crimson flowers famously smelling of chocolate. By nature perennial, growing to about 2ft. As with dahlias, its tubers will need protection to survive the winter. Thought to be extinct in the wild, but still available from Michael Wickenden, Cally Gardens, Gatehouse of Fleet, Castle Douglas, Scotland DG7 2DJ. Fax: 01557 815029 (no phone).

Kirengeshoma palmata: The roots of this handsome perennial are a valued ingredient of traditional medicine in China and Japan and it has suffered as a result. Boasts fine lobed leaves with creamy yellow shuttlecock flowers in late summer and autumn. Prefers light shade and moist, lime-free soil. It is rare in its native habitats, but is available from Holden Clough Nursery, Holden, Bolton-by-

Bowland, Clitheroe, Lancs BB7 4PF (01200 447615).

Lotus berthelotii (coral gem): Common in containers and hanging baskets, but threatened in its native Canary Islands where it has been over-collected for the trade. A perennial, usually used as an annual, with long, hanging stems covered with fine, silvery foliage. Clusters of dark reddish-brown flowers in late summer. Endangered in the wild, but available from most garden centres or Church Hill Cottage Gardens, Charing Heath, Ashford, Kent TN27 0BU (01233 712522).

Magnolia wilsonii: Under pressure, as the bark is regularly harvested for medicinal use in its native China. Deciduous tree or shrub of slender growth (to 25ft) and hanging white flowers in June. Best in partial shade. Unable to regenerate easily in the wild, thus vulnerable, but available from Norfields, Lower

Meend, St Briavels, Glouce GL15 6RW Tel: 01594 530134.

Paeonia cambessedesii: Once common in Spain and Majorca, where its habitats have been overrun by tourist development. Low growing (18in) perennial with wonderful leaves, pewter suffused with purplish-red. Deep rose-pink flowers in mid-spring. Now rare in the wild, but available from the Monocot Nursery, Jacklands, Jacklands Bridge, Tickham, Clevedon, Avon BS21 6SG (01275 810394).

Rhododendron rex, subspecies feticolactum: Native of south-west China where many of its natural habitats are disappearing. One of the hardest of the large-leaved species, reaching more than 20ft where it is happy. Its creamy white flowers are blotched with crimson. Vulnerable in the wild, but available from Glendock Gardens, Glencarse, Perth, Scotland PH2 7NS (01738 860205).

CUTTINGS

NEWS FROM THE GARDENERS' WORLD

MILLENNIUM TREES
No 2: Hawthorn
THE TREES that crop up most frequently in English place names are holly and ash, but we shall never know whether these names once celebrated the most common trees in the neighbourhood, or trees that were sufficiently uncommon to be significant. Neither explanation interferes with the fact that hawthorns are ancient and venerable elements of our landscape. They are not noble in the way that a beech or an oak is. The great tree-man, Alan Mitchell, evidently thought them so humble that he left them entirely out of his fine book, *Trees of Britain* (HarperCollins, £14.99). But they are survivors, growing in a wide variety of tough billets and providing food for an extraordinary number and variety of insects and birds.

More to the point, they are manageable. Any garden, however small, can accommodate a hawthorn, with its dense, interlocking branches and sturdy trunk. The wild hawthorn of hedgerows is *Crataegus monogyna*, which, even in old age, is scarcely more than 25ft tall. In areas where a garden drifts into a wilder country landscape, this would still be my first choice. Urban gardeners may like to choose showier types of thorn, such as *Crataegus laevis* 'Paul's Scarlet' with blossom of brilliant red, or



Millennium tree: hawthorn, left. Swiss chard is good to eat. A-Z Botanical



C. persimilis 'Prunifolia': which has highly polished leaves to set off its large, persistent and showy fruit.

THOMPSON AND Morgan's Flower of 1999 is a new primrose-coloured foxglove, discovered by chance by one of their customers. It is a wonderful colour, with each individual flower heavily speckled in deep mahogany. Unfortunately, it is dwarfish - a contradiction in this particular flower. Foxglove 'Primrose Carousel' is available at £1.99 for 50 seeds. To place an order, call the credit card order line: 01473 690869. For a copy of Thompson & Morgan's new catalogue, call 01473 601090.

GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP has allowed the Royal

Botanic Gardens at Kew to make a major feature from its collection of philadelphus (mock orange). The shrubs used to grow in two beds in the south part of the gardens, but were badly overcrowded. Most of the original plants sent by collectors had died off.

The few hybrids that remained were of little scientific value. The new feature is made up of 19 beds grouped round the base of the famous Pagoda at Kew. Fourteen beds will be planted with wild species, five filled with cultivars. Prepare your nose for a treat later this summer.

MARSHALLS, THE East Anglian seed merchant, has recently produced a simple leaflet showing which vegetables are good for us

and why. Broccoli and Brussels sprouts are top of its list of the 15 most useful vegetables, because both contain high levels of glucosinolates. There are two types of this substance: sinigrin, present in sprouts, suppresses the development of pre-cancerous cells. Glucoraphanin (in broccoli) helps neutralise cancer cells before they build up to alarming levels. But both sprouts and broccoli are also high in protein, iron and Vitamin A.

Other vegetables which Marshall's says you should be eating include carrots, endive (particularly high in calcium), fennel, kale, lettuce, parsley (all good for magnesium and Vitamin C), peas, hot chilli peppers, salsify, spinach, sweet corn, Swiss chard and turnips.

ANNA PAVORD

TRAVEL: FRANCE, GREECE

France

DISCOVER FRANCE
Luxury Mobile Home Holidays in Beautiful Brittany & the Western coast
UP TO 4 CHILDREN TRAVEL FREE
Call 01483 284044 for our brochure

MATTHEWS HOLIDAYS

Villas & Cottages
Many with pools. FREE on route hotel. Coast and country. PHONE FOR A BROCHURE 0845 070 1100

Super Sites
Great value for money staying at our own French Villas & Cottages. Free by air £299. Car & Boat hire. 0171 802 7472 A&A

FRANCE RIVERIA Affordable
Great value for money staying at our own French Villas & Cottages. Free by air £299. Car & Boat hire. 0171 802 7472 A&A

BRITANNY
COTTAGES TO CHOOSE FROM
For a colour brochure call 08700 760 760

CHYZHAW '99
SAVE MONEY - BOOK DIRECTLY
300+ PRIVATE OWNERS ADVERTISE
Villas & Farmhouses, many with pools & gardens. Call now for your FREE 356 page colour directory 08700 730 730

France

FAMILY ACTIVITIES
WITH THE FRENCH ALPS
FREE CARTRIDGE ON HIRE
France Active Brochure Line 01242 240 310

VFB
VFB Holidays Ltd (CORS) Cheltenham GL50 2PB www.vfb.co.uk

VFB
VFB Holidays Ltd (CORS) Cheltenham GL50 2PB www.vfb.co.uk

VFB
VFB Holidays Ltd (CORS) Cheltenham GL50 2PB www.vfb.co.uk

Greece

There are still bits of Greece just waiting to be discovered.
We have traditional houses, villas and apartments in the villages of Parga and Skopje and on the islands of Rhodes, Lefkada, Corfu, Zakynthos, Lefkada, Rhodes and Cyprus. Parga from Greece, Macedonia and Georgia. Call for a brochure. 0181 785 1234

The Pedagogue
Hydra, Zante, Skiathos, Skiathos, Skiathos. Escape the mainstream with this award-winning Greek specialist. Charming villas & a warm welcome in mainland Greece and the Sporades. www.pedagogue.com 0181 995 9223

FILOXENIA
Exclusive Packages: Mainland & Unusual Islands. Houses, hot decorated towns, the drive, villas, pools, white beaches. ATOL 2617 ATOL 01422 378989.

Specialist Greece
Including direct to island flights. Flexible weekend Fly Drives. Including and selling. 0181-847-4748

THE INDEPENDENT
Parga, Corfu, Skiathos, Zakynthos, Rhodes, Lefkada, Parga and Corfu. For a 1999 Brochure please call 0171 232 3223 Greek Options Ltd. ATOL 01780 06795 Atol 2767 ATOL 4295

Greek Islands Club
Villa holidays for those who want to escape the crowds in style and comfort. Parga - Zakynthos - Skiathos - Skiathos - Skiathos - Skiathos - Skiathos - Skiathos. Call now for your FREE 356 page colour directory 0181 568 6838

Two legs good, four wheels bad

COUNTRY MATTERS



DUFF
HART-DAVIS

The ground is in a dreadful state, with the winter breaking records for rainfall: springs are bursting out where none have flowed before, topsoil is being eroded by the ton, and mud with the consistency of porridge lies knee-deep in gateways trampled by cattle.

Small wonder, then, that landowners, walkers and riders are at daggers-drawn with the drivers of 4x4 vehicles which churn green lanes, bridleways and footpaths into a morass. One notorious theatre of dispute is the Ridgeway, the ancient track that runs east and west along the summit of the Berkshire Downs: a hiker recently described the stretch above Marlborough as being like the battlefield of the Somme.

The leading force for conservation is Glean, the Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement, founded in 1996 by David Gardiner, a farmer living near Newbury. Today GLEAN has over 1,000 members, including 65 MPs and 16 MEPs drawn from all parties, and its aim is to protect ancient lanes from damage by recreational vehicles.

In the view of its founder-chairman, the law has become hopelessly inadequate, in that it makes no distinction between motorised and unmotorised vehicles, or between surfaced and unsurfaced roads.

"A 30-ton articulated lorry is the same in law as a pony and trap," he says, "and a green lane byway no different from a six-lane dual carriageway."

The group is seeking to establish legal definitions of "motorised" and "unmotorised", "surfaced" and "unsurfaced"; it also wants a ban on motor vehicles using unsurfaced roads, except for access, unless specially permitted by the responsible highway authority.

Mr Gardiner has been personally vilified in 4x4 magazines, but he is far from alone in trying to keep green lanes intact. Skirmishes between the two sides are going on all over the country, and nowhere more vigorously than in Herefordshire, where the county council is considering nearly 20 applications to have paths and bridleways declared Boats - Byways Open to All Traffic.

According to Dr John Harrison, Chairman of the Battle for Bridleway Group, based near Leominster, the root of the problem lies in the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, which places a county council under an obligation to respond to any application for a right of way. When an application comes in, the council must serve notice on any landowner affected, and investigate whether or not a public right of way has ever existed. If evidence comes to light that the way was once open to vehicles - even if they were only carts - the council must declare a Boat, thus granting access to motorists.

The Act expressly denies councils the right to take into consid-



A rambler inspects the damage made by 4x4s and trail bikes at Oareborough Hill, near Chieveley, on the Berkshire Downs

David Gardiner

eration any impact on environment, wildlife, amenity or archaeology: decisions must be based entirely on evidence gleaned from historical records. When a decision is announced, objectors may call for a public inquiry, and they have a month in which to prepare counter-claims; but the inspectors who preside over the inquiry are equally bound by history, and they may not take environmental considerations into account.

This is patently ridiculous, and misses the essential point that vehicular rights were established by horse-drawn carts, hundreds of years before the internal combustion engine was invented.

In Dr Harrison's view: "The trouble is that research in the public records is laborious and technical. The 4x4 clubs are well-funded, and they've retained a lawyer who can devote a major percentage of his time to this work. In effect, they're doing the council's work for them. Most of the objectors are farmers, who have neither the time nor the training to prepare counter-claims."

The landowners fear that north-west Herefordshire will become criss-crossed by a network of Boats, which they claim will destroy the character of the area. In the words of David Keown-Boyd, who lives near Bucknell, over the border in

Shropshire: "If you don't know the area, you cannot envisage the degree of degradation to which this exceptional environment would be subjected."

Yet even he concedes that very few green lanes have been churned

up so far - a point made by one of his most active opponents, Chris Marsden, co-ordinator of the Marches Historic Lane Preservation Group, which is directing the research in county archives.

"His aim," Mr Marsden says, "is

to preserve the character of ancient lanes," which will not survive if they fall out of use because they have been fenced or blocked off. His special interest is in the sunken tracks created by the passage of men, animals and carts over hundreds of years. On such ancient routes, he says, "you're surrounded by history - trees which are very old, hedges which date back a thousand years".

He contends that the damage to such lanes is "fairly light from any sort of vehicles", and that "in most counties there is absolutely none from recreational vehicles". Almost all the damage that does occur, he maintains, is done by farm tractors and trailers, and by the 4x4 trucks of the utility companies and so on.

Indeed, he claims that most lanes would positively benefit from an increase in recreational traffic of between 10- and 50-fold, and should be promoted as a "leisure resource". Such extra use, he believes, would help keep ancient routes clear and maintain their character. He is, of course, "ab-

solutely against any form of trespass", but equally he has no doubt that "People who want to keep the public away from their little bit of old England - they're the menace."

So the argument festers. Meanwhile, the demand for places in which drivers can exercise their 4x4s is enormous. People are happy to pay £25 per car for a cruise along Forestry Commission roads in the nearby Mortimer Forest, even though they scarcely leave hard surfaces. Most of these, though, are beginners, whose Discoveries and Freelanders rarely go off Tarmac, and who have to consult their manuals before they can engage four-wheel drive. Mud-pluggers - the true addicts - pay £100 a day or more for instruction in a really foul environment.

The difficulty is that they actively want what other legitimate users of the countryside most hate - ruts, slippery slopes, water, mud up to the axles; and if they find such amenities freely available in the country, they will take to the lanes in hordes.

NATURE NOTES



ONE CURIOUS feature of woods on the Cotswold escarpment is the proliferation of gooseberry bushes, far from

any human habitation. They rarely flower or fruit, because they are usually on sunless sites, beneath the tree canopy; but their sharp spikes make them unmistakable, and they are among the earliest shrubs to break into leaf. Their presence is due to badgers and

foxes, both of which are partial to fruit. Having gorged themselves in summer gardens or orchards, the scavengers excrete gooseberry seeds, and so propagate the bushes.

SOME TREES, such as sycamores, make use of the wind to spread their seeds, but other species are inadvertently disseminated by wild creatures. Jays carry acorns away from oaks, and either drop them or hide them and forget them. Squirrels also bear off hazel

nuts and beech mast, some of which, if buried, may shoot into seedlings the following spring. The hard seeds of many berries pass unchanged through the digestive tracts of birds, and the tough seeds of weeds such as fat hen and stinging nettle can survive passage through the gut of horse, cow or sheep. Burrs - the prickly seed-cases of plants such as goosegrass - stick to the coats of animals or the clothes of humans, and achieve dispersal that way.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

THE INDEPENDENT Log Effect Bird Box

- £8.95 each including postage & packing

These superb log effect bird boxes are actually made from industrial fibre glass and made to look exactly like the real thing. Made to stand up to the harshest winters and the hottest of summers, they are supported by a ten year manufacturers guarantee.

Great care has been taken to make sure that the bird boxes are as authentic as possible, even to the point of making a wooden entrance piece, just so that it can be reshaped by the occupants, as it would be normally in the wild. Safe from weasels, magpies, rats, squirrels and cats, the bird box will soon attract nuthatches, blue tits, pied flycatchers, coal tits, blue tits, redstarts etc.

Supplied with full fitting instructions, this superb bird box makes a lovely gift for the avid bird watcher. The Bird Box is available for just £8.95 inc p&pk.



HOW TO ORDER - Fill in the coupon and send together with cheque or postal order. NO CASH please to - THE INDEPENDENT BIRD BOX OFFER.

PO Box 5608, Birmingham B74 4DR
For Access/Visa orders, please phone: 0121 323 4481

We deliver to addresses in the UK only. Please allow up to 20 days for delivery from receipt of order. Return within 7 days for refund if not completely satisfied. Offer subject to availability.

Please send me _____ Bird Boxes @ £8.95 each inc p&pk
enclosed a crossed cheque for £_____
(address on back) made payable to:
Independent Newspapers (UK) Ltd (INC243)
or debit my Access/Visa account by this amount. My card number is: _____

Expiry Date: ____/____/____
Signature: _____
NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Post Code: _____
Send to:
THE INDEPENDENT BIRD BOX OFFER,
PO Box 5608, Birmingham B74 4DR.
Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive
other offers from Independent Newspapers
(UK) Ltd or companies associated with
Independent Newspapers (UK) Ltd. ☐ ☐

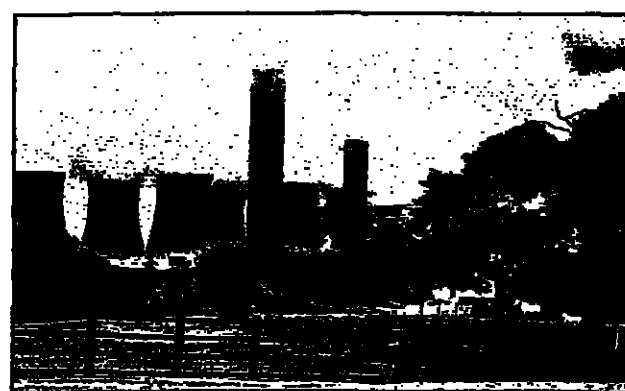
A blot that became beautiful

One of England's largest power stations cast a shadow over Miranda Seymour's childhood. But now its cooling towers and monumental walls have created their own eco-system

MY FATHER, a man of quicksilver moods, plunged into a gloom that spread through the house like a cloak of fog when one of England's biggest power stations was located a mile from our front door. True, a hill stood between us, but it wasn't exactly Everest.

Growing, it seemed as if the thing would carry on like the beanstalk all the way to the sky. I snivelled when I saw my favourite bicycle path disappear under a mountain of coal; my father had his eyes fixed on the eight cooling towers and a chimney which, we heard, was going to be the tallest in the whole of Europe.

Perspective plays wonderful tricks. The chimney, reaching its final majestic height, poked its snout above the hill just far enough to earn the name "George's Folly" from playful guests who hadn't heard my father on the subject. We always warned them. "Don't mention it," we pleaded. "Look the other way. Pretend it isn't there." Wise visitors, taken out to



Power stations are landmarks of the 20th century

admire the estate, stared resolutely in the opposite direction. A well-meaning few said the towers were rather splendid. The rashest pointed to where the snout loomed above the garden and said, with horror in their voices: "And what in God's name is that?"

They weren't asked back. Noise was also to be ignored, even when the thing roared like a beast above the polite clatter of plates around

our breakfast-table. Later, when my father got his sense of humour back, he was able to grin about the time he had called the noise monitor over and told him to bring a tape recorder. The only noise recorded in three excruciatingly long hours was the sound of two swans flapping their wings.

Thirty years on, the station is part of the landscape. The pheasants were the first to realise they were on to a good thing and to defect, en masse, to roost among the cooling towers. Foxes, patrolling the skyline, glare through the wire mesh fence at a hillside - the station side, not ours - as rich in rabbits as *Watership Down*. On the river, where thousands of tepid gallons are belched back into the Trent every day, the anglers crow that they've never had it so good. In the warm dark ponds at the base of the cooling towers, gigantic carp breed and circle in a state of mindless pleasure, safe in the knowledge that the longest rod in the world is never going to reach them through a wall of steaming water.

The bicycle path went; others, in spite of distance of the towers, survived. Walking last week along a towpath to a lock and a pretty hump-backed bridge by a shop where my brother and I used to buy Walls cornets and - it seemed so sophisticated - bottles of dandelion and burdock fizz, I thought I'd walked into the

past. Until, that is, the sun went in and I looked round to see why. Lying in the shadow of the towers, 100 yards away, there's a farm and a paddock where Sebastopol geese, chickens, Aylesbury ducks and a couple of peacocks keep company with two friendly lurchers and a donkey. A few yards further on, one of the prettiest small churches I know keeps quiet guard over its alabaster monuments and effigies. You could be in the 17th century until you walk out of its wooden door, snack up against the station.

I used to hate it. Now, I drag visitors up for a sunset stroll on the hilltop. Look one way and you see green fields, the red-brick chimneys and curving gables of a Jacobean house lying at its ease among oaks and larches and cedars. Look the other, and you see a 30th-century fortress rising from the plain. Its massive walls flushed pink by a hectic sky. If I'd come back from some ancient civilisation, I'd think this was a temple of the Gods.

INDEPENDENT ADVICE FOR THE INDEPENDENT TRAVELLER:
FROM THE ONLY NATIONAL NEWSPAPER TRAVEL SECTION THAT REFUSES FREE TRIPS

In the first of two articles about Jamaica, James Ferguson discovers that there's more to the island's cuisine than rice 'n' peas

A Jamaican publisher friend of mine, Ian, peering approvingly into a large pot of boiled dumplings and yams, says: "This is food." It's not meant as a value judgement - there's no stress on the "this". It's simply a linguistic clarification, because the starchy, stodgy tuberous bits of the Caribbean diet, also sometimes known as "ground provisions", are simply called "food" in Jamaica. These rib-sticking delicacies have many names - pumpkin, yams, eddoes, dasheen - but to the untutored palate they all taste pretty much the same. Rather solid.

That food and starch should be synonymous in this part of the world doesn't come entirely as a surprise. Jamaican cooking is calorific, to say the least, with the emphasis on frying and baking, and favoured ingredients that include coconut milk, butter and condensed milk. A Jamaican Sunday brunch would be considered meagre without boiled green bananas, fried plantains, rice 'n' peas and - when in season - roasted breadfruit. And those are just the side dishes.

It seems that a love of stodge runs deep among the many different peoples who have inhabited this fertile island over the centuries. The indigenous Tainos left a taste for cassava, which remains as an ingredient in the present-day "bammy", a flat, round bread. Their Spanish tormentors introduced not only sugarcane, but bananas and rice too. The British are responsible for dumplings and potatoes, while the Africans they shipped over into slavery introduced such heavyweight delicacies as "festival", a deep-fried cylinder of cornmeal.

But carbohydrate isn't the whole story. Subtle - and less than subtle - herbs and spices are intrinsic to Jamaican cooking and similarly reflect the island's mixed cultural history. Curry came with 19th century indentured Indian labourers, while scorchingly hot chilli probably reflects a Spanish love of the *cañita*. As in all Caribbean Creole cultures, the result of mixed European, African and Asian influences is an intriguing blend of tastes.

The idea was for Ian and me to drive around the island, sampling some of these tastes in a culinary circuit. He assured me that each of the island's 14 parishes had a particular delicacy and that most of them could be tried at the roadside (the variety and quality of "street foods" are a particular feature of Jamaican



Starchy, stodgy, tuberous vegetables, like the pumpkins and yams sold in Montego Bay, are simply called "food" in Jamaica David Cummings/Eye Ubiquitous

Yam, bam, thanks mam

eating, he said - turnover is quick and food-poisoning risks minimised. All this, moreover, was to be done in a spirit of research: having already published a Jamaican cookery book, Ian was interested in a parish-by-parish follow-up. This was to be a sort of recipe.

First, Kingston. A large, steamy, traffic-clogged city, with some distinctly dodgy areas, and not really on the tourist map. But even so, it has several very good restaurants and a network of tastee patty outlets, which sell the ubiquitous and delicious Jamaican snack for about 20 pence a time. While lingering on the streets after dark isn't perhaps a great idea, I felt sufficiently bold to try some drum chicken. This is the

urban version of rural jerk chicken, seasoned and barbecued in an oil drum. Billowing and pungent smoke leads you to these roadside vendors, and a parcel of tender and spicy chicken pieces costs about £1.50.

Setting off early up towards Ocho Rios, we drove over the central mountains. After deep and dark river gorges and mountainside bends, the road emerges onto a plateau at Moneague, where a row of some 30 shacks awaits the peckish passer-by. They compete fiercely, offering grilled corn on the cob, curry goat, oxtail soup and, of course, jerk chicken. Jerk chicken, is not hard to find. Every village seems to have a "jerk centre", which I found amusing (Ian didn't).

Heading west along the coast road, we gave the all-inclusive resorts and condominiums a wide berth, passing through decaying market towns and half-built tourist strips until reaching Montego Bay (apparently a corruption of the Spanish *manteca*, or lard). The scruffy town centre seems to be in a state of continual gridlock, a situation which may explain the unusual incidence of lunacy - one eccentric woman insisted on locking our car windows. Our appetites duly dampened, we none the less managed to eat "one pot" bowls of red pea soup - a stew so thick that one pot is all you need.

Cursing our overnight stay in the luxury Half Moon Club at MoBay (eating bland, imported gravadlax

and watching the Japanese guests), we continued hungrily along the road. Ian grew more cheerful as we neared his home parish of Hanover. Like all Kingston residents, he waxes lyrical about a fast-disappearing rural Jamaica, and I could see his point as we drove through ramshackle-but-pretty villages, and plantations of coconut palms. The sea is always nearby at this western tip of the island, so it seemed like a good idea to try some fish. Escovitch is the name given to the marinade of vinegar, onions and hot red peppers into which the fried fish is immersed. Well, I think that was the system, even though it seemed the wrong way around.

We carried on south through

Savanna-la-Mar to the atmospheric and rather rundown town of Bluefields. It was time for another meal and I had a thick and delicious fish soup - much better, I thought, than the bony escovitch. We settled for just a few bammies and a bag of ackee to take back to Kingston.

A few hours later in Mandeville, as if by some natural metabolic self-defence mechanism, I had developed raging toothache. Despite that, the trip up to Boston Bay in Portland parish on the north-east tip was deemed compulsory. Two hours and many potholes from Kingston, this is the home of authentic jerk food, the style of cooking that reputedly started with the Tainos. Chicken or pork is marinated in a

mix of spices and then barbecued over pimento wood in a special pit dug in the ground. Alas, in the midst of torrential rain we were the only tourists - or researchers - on the culinary circuit and Ian suddenly announced that the pork was less than fresh. Unfortunately really, since I had already eaten half of mine and spent the rest of the day fearfully awaiting retribution. It never came.

After so much roadside sustenance, I wasn't exactly hungry, but was keen to meet Norma Shirley, the queen of new Jamaican cooking and the inspiration behind Norma at the Wharhouse, near Montego Bay, and Red Bones in Kingston. These places are chic, expensive (£30-40 a head), and anything but stodgy. At Red Bones, I had chicken breast in fromage fraise and champagne sauce on a guava coulis. And no "food".

Norma used to be a nurse in London, married a doctor, and once lived in the posh Dulwich estate where Mrs Thatcher bought a house. She had discovered good food during trips to France, had worked in a Berkshire restaurant and moved to New York before returning to Jamaica. She is now a star, the subject of TV shows and *Vogue* features.

Much Jamaican food is unhealthy, she admits, and she caters to a small, discriminating clientele, using olive oil and herbs, but little salt. Her trademark ingredients, it seems, are thyme, scallion and Scotch bonnet red peppers. Wherever possible, she says, she uses local ingredients, preferably from the mountainous interior near the town of Christiana. Not far from cool, upland Mandeville, this is small-holder country and reputedly the best place for organic vegetables. Norma dismisses the "waxed apple syndrome" of imported American food, the kind of synthetic stuff that she says is dished out in the all-inclusives.

I ventured to ask her what her favourite meal might be. "Oxtail and stew peas," she replied promptly. That might not be "food", but it's still pretty Jamaican.

British Airways and Air Jamaica fly to Kingston and Montego Bay. There are also a great many connecting flights from Miami.

Red Bones in Kingston is at 21 Braemar Avenue (001 876 978 8262); Norma at the Wharhouse is at Reading, west of Montego Bay (001 876 979 2745). A good book on the island's food is Erid Donaldson's *Real Taste of Jamaica* (Ian Randle, £12.95).

James Ferguson is the author of *The Traveller's History of the Caribbean* (Windrush Press, £8.99).

Women are sex tourists too

Is it the romance that women are paying for in Jamaica? Or is it a feeling of power that they can't get at home? By Sue Wheat

THE CARIBBEAN is marketed as Paradise. And for many, an important element of Paradise is being adored. Many single white women visiting Jamaica will discover that there is no shortage of Jamaican men willing to earn money from spending time with female tourists. Some are paid cash, but more often than not their payment is in the form of meals, clothes, or the promise of a visa to the West.

A British sociologist, Jackie Sanchez-Taylor from Leicester University, has found that almost half the women she questioned in Negril, Jamaica, had had one or more sexual relationships with a Jamaican man while on holiday. Their justifications were not unlike those made by their male counterparts - that the people they have sex with are not like "ordinary prostitutes" and are less critical than partners at home.

"Today, some female sex tourists are travelling to reaffirm their femininity," Jackie Sanchez-Taylor explains in her book, *Tourism, Travel and Sex*. "Women who feel rejected by men in the West are 'sweet-talked' and 'loved' by men abroad, and once again find that they exist as sexual objects."

So, as Shirley Valentine



Shirley Valentine had to go abroad to be appreciated

demonstrated, by travelling across the world, it's possible to be fawned over by highly desirable men. But not all women are overcoming insecurities. Some are just looking for an unpressured good time, aren't they? In this case, what they get is power - the power to decide how long the relationship lasts, and to have a relationship with the type of person not normally available to them.

"Where at home they might be stigmatised for having relationships with black men, younger men, 'womanisers', or for having many sexual partners," says Ms Sanchez-Taylor, "in holiday resorts such as Negril, they are permitted to 'con-

sume' the black male, the younger boy, the playboy or as many men as they desire while maintaining their reputation back home."

So, for once, they can experience feeling more powerful than a man - and particularly a black man, a person who they may stereotypically think of as "hypersexual" or "dangerous" at home.

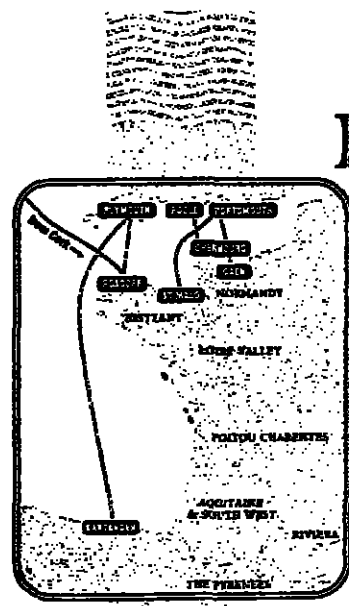
But control over a sexual relationship is not the main objective for all female sex tourists. Many prefer to use their power to affirm themselves as kind, caring women. For example, one Canadian interviewee, a divorcee near retirement age, conducted a

long-distance romance for 18 months with a Jamaican "countryman" 20 years her junior, who "lived the simple life of a farmer in the mountains". She sent him money and brought gifts from Canada and taught him to read, write and appreciate classical music.

"She said she didn't want someone who would swamp her with emotional demands. When she visits, she spends her time buying him shorts and shirts and cooking him big pots of food because when she goes back to Canada 'he eats very little,'" explains Ms Sanchez-Taylor.

So by being the farmer's "civilising" influence, the woman is using sex tourism to reassert herself. Many tourist women find the idea of caring for and taming a "noble savage" romantic. "Gigolos" in Negril are quick to tap into this demand and many claim to be "country farmers" who only venture into Negril now and then to sell products they have grown or made. They become mirrors which reflect the female sex tourist's chosen image of femininity.

Tourism, Travel and Sex, Eris S Clift and S Carter, is published by Pinter later this year



AWARD WINNING
CRUISE-FERRIES

EXCELLENT
RESTAURANTS

GREAT VALUE FARES

IDEAL FOR
ALL OF HOLIDAY
FRANCE & SPAIN

HUGE CHOICE
OF HOLIDAYS

20% EARLY BOOKING
DISCOUNTS ON OVER
2000 GITES &
HOLIDAY HOMES

DIRECT TO HOLIDAY FRANCE & SPAIN



IN COMFORT & STYLE

Only our award-winning, cruise-ferries capture that special holiday feeling. Relax and savour the marvellous French cuisine, the stylish bars and boutiques.

Our routes take you direct to attractive holiday ports in Brittany, Normandy and Spain, with fast, modern roads leading you swiftly to your destination.

And our huge range of self-catering and self-drive holidays and breaks offer you all the finest pleasures of Holiday France and Spain.



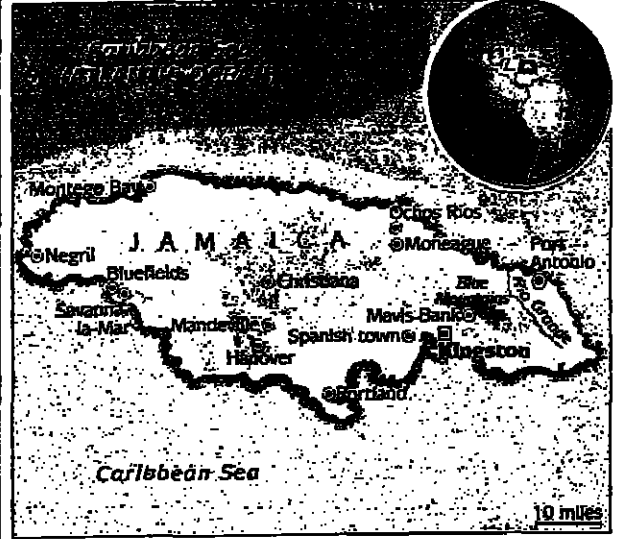
1999 Brochure range: Ferry Guide • Gite Holidays • Holiday Homes in France & Spain
Golf Breaks • Hotel Breaks

TELEPHONE 0990 143 537 RESERVATIONS & INFORMATION 0990 360 360 OR SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

LOOK BEFORE YOU BOOK

ABTA

When you see the ABTA symbol, you can be confident that the description of your travel arrangements complies with our strict guidelines on accuracy. The same care and attention goes into checking every ABTA travel agent and tour operator's finances. For a leaflet on ABTA, call 0171 307 1991.



Beware of low flying fruit

At Mardi Gras, the Belgian town of Binche is pelted with oranges by men in padded suits. By Clare Thomson



The Gilles, young men from Binche, dress up like escapees from a Wonderland emergency ward and pound the streets, acting out ancient fertility rites

Charles Lenars

Forget sweaty spectacles in Rio or pancake-tossing rituals in Pangbourne: to the citizens of Binche, Belgium's carnival capital, Mardi Gras is a chance to paint the town red. Blood-red.

And, if you visit the former mining town in the run-up to carnival, you'll see shopkeepers frantically masking their windows with chicken wire. On Mardi Gras afternoon, you'll understand why: hundreds of men in padded suits and fluffy feather head-dresses pelt buildings and bystanders with blood oranges, gleefully smashing unprotected windows.

Around 300,000 fruit are lobbed during a two-hour riot that leaves the town centre moist with pulp and, although revellers may no longer hurl broomheads or flour at people who they think aren't joining in, that proves to be small comfort if you happen to have copped a fruit flush on the temple.

The fun-loving Binchois have performed similar rituals for the best part of a thousand years. In the 16th century, when the town was favoured by a Low Countries governor, Mary of Hungary, revellers across the Habsburg empire boasted that their wildest exploits were *mas braves que las fiestas de Boina* (the old name for the town). Despite spiralling unemployment, the carnival remains as intact as the 12th-century ramparts that ring its centre, making this Belgium's only walled city.

Festival songs say that, come Carnival, young men spend their

year's earnings in less than a week; in fact, the event requires year-long sacrifice. What with costume rental, society subscriptions, drink and insurance, the bill can come to over £1,000 per participant.

At the Carnival's heart are the Gilles, weirdly costumed figures who stomp the streets with hypnotic regularity throughout Mardi Gras, recalling ancient fertility rites to banish evil spirits from the winter soil. With be-clogged feet, straw-stuffed backs and bellies, bandaged heads and suits adorned with lions, crowns and stars, they look like escapees from a kind of Wonderland Accident & Emergency Department. Folklore has it that they were born 450 years ago, when Mary's courtiers dressed as Incas to celebrate the conquest of Peru, but scholars say that the Gilles are an 18th-century street-theatre character, a cousin of

Harlequin who possesses ancient magical powers.

For a Binchois, becoming a Gilles is the highest honour imaginable. Veterans proudly boast that, while other festive traditions have been debased down the years, their carnival remains as authentic as ever. That's partly due to a sense of insularity, of being walled in against the world (locals say that there are only two places in the world - Binche and abroad). It's also down to the fanatical strictness with which customs are maintained.

To become a Gilles, you must be male, of Belgian nationality and born in Binche - or have lived there for five years; once you've attained the hallowed status, you must never wear your costume outside the ramparts of Binche. Wee beside anyone who flouts the rules: if you're seen out of costume, or travelling in a car,

you can be barred from Gilleshood for life. Even the elderly or ill must slip into muffs before thumbing a lift. There are a few honourable exceptions: in 1943, a group of Gilles in a Nazi prison camp defied their oppressors by parading in Carnival gear made from paper and tin cans.

Mardi Gras is the culmination of weeks of wild parties and a year of preparation. Madness mounts throughout the New Year, when the Gilles amass in front of the onion-domed town hall for a marathon of Sunday rehearsals, shaking the cobbles of the central square to the ceaseless beat of drums.

The locals shuffle behind the Gilles-in-waiting, inching towards the next tavern and another Binchoise beer (if you need to brush up on the shuffle dance, try to get through to the bar). The Binchois tease any visitors in the relevant di-

allect, explaining "we love a good laugh". As Carnival draws near, it's time for gala balls and the anarchic Night of the Trouilles ("pigs") de Nouilles, when heavily disguised local wisen enter bars, cafes and homes, poking fun at customers and demanding a free drink. But the weeks of ribaldry are only a prelude to the chaos that cuts loose over the three "fat days".

The riot begins on Dimanche Gras, when men dress as women, or Mam'zelles, and the Gilles-to-be sport luxurious costumes. Favourites include Madame de Pompadour, England's Elizabeth I and Tintin characters, but there's plenty of room for topical improvisation. Monday is a chance for diaphanous ravers to get their breath back, a family day when the youth groups of the town's political parties settle their scores in confetti battles.

But Mardi Gras is what they've all been waiting for. Men are reduced to tears when they talk about wearing the Gilles suit, while mothers admit to weeping with pride as their spotless sons leave the house before dawn, to return in a somewhat more spattered state the following morning. Gilles drink only champagne throughout the day, and the bubbly flows from 5am as the Gilles waddle from house to house, collecting their mates and downing a flute at every stop. As a symbol of equality, they wear wax masks painted with green spectacles and curling ginger whiskers.

Unless you have friends in Binche, you're unlikely to see this ritual, although in recent years tourists have turned up uninvited at private homes, with nary a bottle of Bolly for their hosts. Better to arrive around 8am as hundreds of Gilles converge on the station, a mock-Gothic vaulted marvel that recalls the town's industrial peak.

The Carnival kings abandon their masks after lunch, donning the feathers as the orange-throwing begins. At night, the Pierrots, Harlequins and Oriental princes join the Gilles, juicing the ground for hours on end as fireworks detonate around them. Those with staying power stomp 'til dawn, sustained by drink and the never-ending drums.

There's only one hotel in town, so you're better off staying in Brussels or in nearby Mons. Stagger back to the station at dawn as the Gilles retreat in a hungover haze, and ponder next year's bash - and this year's damage.

FACT FILE

The Binche Carnival begins on 14 February and grinds to a halt at dawn on 17 February.

For details of accommodation in Binche or Mons, call Binche tourist office on 00 32 64 336727, or the Francophone part of the Belgian tourist office in London, on 0171-458 2888.

By rail, Eurostar (0990 186186) offers a 289 return from London

to Binche (or anywhere else in Belgium) via Brussels. Book a week in advance and stay away a Saturday night. For Brussels-Binche connections, call Belgian Railways (0171-593 2332).

By air, the main carrier to Belgium is Sabena (0181-780 1222), which flies to Brussels from Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds-Bradford, Manchester and Newcastle. From Heathrow,

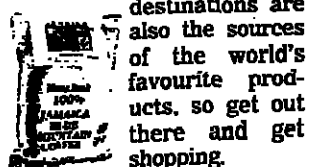
Gatwick and Stansted, Virgin Express (0800 891199) offers one-way tickets from £39. By train, Binche is around one hour from Brussels airport.

Binche is home to the Carnival and Mask Museum (10 Rue Saint-Moustier; 0032 64 335741), which has the largest collection of masks in the world; until 18 April, it hosts a show devoted to Swiss revelry that makes the Binchois celebrations look rational.



Journey to the source

A JOURNEY is really complete without a souvenir or two. So, rather than being an afterthought at the duty-free counter, why not make shopping the basis of your itinerary? Some of the world's best travel destinations are also the sources of the world's favourite products, so get out there and get shopping.



If you're planning a visit to Jamaica (see page 19), it makes sense to explore the area that gives its name to Blue Mountain coffee, first produced in Jamaica in 1757 and now sipped by wealthy caffeine-consumers the world over.

The Caribbean Islands Handbook (Footprint Books, £14.99) describes these moun-

tains, which rise to a height of 7,402ft at Blue Mountain Peak, as "one of the most spectacular and beautiful parts of Jamaica".

Teh book also gives handy advice for anyone venturing into this coffee-producing area.

Public transport is infrequent, so drive up past the Blue Mountain Inn, through Mavis Bank and into Hagley

Gap. From here, the steep but signposted trail to Blue Mountain Peak takes three to four hours up and two to three hours down.

The views are more worthy of the climb later in the day. Along the way, the lower slopes are covered in intensely verdant vegetation, banana plantations and, of course, coffee

groves. Higher up, tree ferns and dwarf forest appear and, if you're lucky, a doctor bird or two. This swallow-tailed hummingbird is Jamaica's national bird and fairly common in the area.

Should all the climbing make you thirsty, you have two options. The first is to stock up locally: you can stop off on your way back at Mavis Bank Central Factory (001 876 977 8528 or e-mail: jablum@wt.jam.net). One of the oldest and largest coffee producers on the island, the factory sells the real Blue Mountain stuff for US\$19 per lb (£11). Or you can pick up a reasonably-priced bag in the duty-free shop.

If the island doesn't feature in your immediate travel plans, nip down to the just-opened Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee Shop, at 18a, Maddox Street, London W1 (0171-408 2272). A pound of Blue Mountain coffee here costs £28, but if the British price makes you wince, sit back and soothe your aching wallet with a cup of Blue Mountain Filter Coffee (£1.30) instead. This chic cafe is open Monday to Friday 7.30am to 7.30pm and on Saturdays 10am to 5pm.

On Thursday evenings, when the place is open until 10pm, you can listen to live Jamaican music and dream of funding your Jamaican jaunt by

buying up enough coffee to cash in on back home. The profit from only 15 bags of Jamaican-bought coffee could buy you the current £249 return charter fare to Montego Bay with Jetline (0171-360 1111).

Gadget of the week
IF YOU want to arrive at your destination looking fresh-faced and ready to rumble your way through the urban jungle, help is at hand in a little 50ml tube.

One of the main culprits in disembarking from an aeroplane looking puff-faced and pallid is often not the lack of sleep, free booze or even unscheduled diversions. Pressurised cabin air can be extremely drying - particularly on skin that's already had to deal with the impact of sun, sand and too many happy-hour cocktails.

So, next time you pack your suitcase, forget the bottle of baby oil and stock up instead on SkyHydra, a new moisturiser designed for use on long-haul flights. Available duty free (£14.95) at many British airports, or by mail order (£18.95 with duty) on 01634 226203, moisturising ingredients include pro-vitamin B5, vitamin E, coconut oil, calendula and aloe vera and it is light enough to use everyday - even if you're not a daily jet-setter.

RELIANNON EATTEN

THE SHOPPING FORECAST

St. Catherine's Monastery & Petra

visiting St. Catherine's Monastery and the Rose Red City of Petra

The convenient location of the 4-star Coral Hilton Hotel in Nuweiba makes it possible to combine the fascinating sites of St. Catherine's Monastery with the rose red city of Petra. The journey is further made possible by the direct flights from London Gatwick to Sharm el-Sheikh and the regular ferry services to Aqaba. Our journey commences with a four-night stay at the Coral Hilton Resort at Nuweiba. This will be our base both for relaxation on the Red Sea coast to enjoy the winter sunshine and our visits to St. Catherine's Monastery and the Coloured Canyon. On Day 5 transfer by hydrofoil to Aqaba and travel north by road to Petra and the Petra Forum hotel for the next three nights.

During the stay at Petra we will visit various areas of the site (entrance fee not included) and make optional visits to Little Petra and Wadi Rum, the location of David Lean's film 'Lawrence of Arabia'. On Day 8 drive to Aqaba for the regular passenger service to Sharm el-Sheikh and the return flight to London Gatwick.

7 nights from £595



TV and minibar. Other facilities include two restaurants, lounge, terrace/pool bar, swimming pool and shops.

DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

Thursdays 1999 - per person in twin

February 11, 18, 25 £595
March 4, 11, 18, 25 £635 - April 8, 15, 22, 29 £635
May 6, 13, 20, 27 £635 - June 3, 10, 17, 24 £635
July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 £635

* Single room supplement £165

Includes: flights, 7 nights accommodation, half board Petra, room only Nuweiba, excursions to St. Catherine's Coloured Canyon, local guide, 17% departure tax, not included: insurance, visa procurement, overseas airport taxes, entrance fees to Petra, tips. Our current Conditions of Booking (on request) shall apply to all reservations.

0171-616 1000

VOYAGES JULES VERNE

21 Dorset Square, London NW1 6GG

Tel: 0171-616 1000 Fax: 0171-616 1001

The office is open for telephone reservations from 9am to 5pm weekdays and from 9am to 5pm at the weekends. For personal visits our office hours are from 10am to 5pm weekdays only.

Just 2 1/2 hours from London
and 2 hours from Glasgow



Discover
Amazing
Iceland

....and a friendly smile!

Iceland is a spectacular destination for an unforgettable holiday, a country of scenery that leaves you breathless, green valleys, blue mountains, thundering waterfalls, erupting geysers, dormant volcanoes, majestic glaciers, clean refreshing air and friendly people.

For details of tour operators and an information pack call the 24-hour Brochure Line on 0181 255 7373.



ICELANDAIR
www.icelandair.co.uk
e-mail: london@icelandair.is
reservation: 0171 388 5599

high
of the

CORSICAN PLACES

We specialise in Corsica lovely villas with pools, cottages by the sea, medieval village houses, carefully selected hotels. Very friendly personal service.

Tel: 01424 460046
Fax: 01424 460033
www.corsica.co.uk

ATOL 2647

Quality Boating Holidays in France

For your free brochure call
FRANCE AFLOAT
01905 616428

Mallore

From the most popular resorts of Majorca / Mallorca or to the more relaxing resorts of Minorca / Menorca. Call D'or Holidays office for a wide range of Apartments, Hotels, Villas. All with Pools.

Phone from 6.12pm: 01293 433 238
01293 433 238

Small group holidays off the beaten track...

AFRICA EAST AFRICA EAST AFRICA EAST

For superb brochures call
01420 541007

Open 7 days a week
Newspaper Advertising (500)
18 Turk St, Alton, Hants GU34 1AQ
www.newspaperadvertising.co.uk
Fully bonded ATOL 2009

Small group holidays off the beaten track...

AFRICA EAST AFRICA EAST AFRICA EAST

For superb brochures call
01420 541007

Open 7 days a week
Newspaper Advertising (500)
18 Turk St, Alton, Hants GU34 1AQ
www.newspaperadvertising.co.uk
Fully bonded ATOL 2009

The Travel Club of Upminster

Good quality, good value villas and apartments. Also small family-run hotels. Personal Service. Regional flights.

Call 01708 225000 for your 1999 holiday choice
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

Sunair

Specialist in the best quality holiday homes in the sun. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry.

Tel: 0181 847 4748 (24 hrs)
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

Tailor-made holidays and private car tours in the Indian subcontinent, Indo-China, Persia and Central Asia. Exclusive beach holidays and river cruises too.

Brochure from 01572 821330
ATOL 1685

Adventure Travel

017678 73968
adventuretravel@btinternet.com

With Explore Travel you see more... Choose from over 200 small group holidays to the countries:

Hikes and treks, Wildlife Safaris, Sea and River Journeys, Wilderness Experiences, Cultural Adventures. Tours from 8 days to 4 weeks, price from under £400 to over £2,000. Millennium departures available. Fully bonded ATOL 2009. Call 01252 760161 for your free copy.

CATHERINE SECKER (Crete)

Enormously proud of its long standing reputation a small well established family business boasting only a handful of immaculate self-catering properties close to the sea in North West Crete.

0181 460 8022
ATOL 2009 - ATOL

SPAIN, PORTUGAL, MADEIRA AND CANARY ISLANDS

Paradises, Country houses and hotels in 'undiscovered' Spain, Madeira and Canary Islands.

For a free brochure call:
0171 822 6021
0181 848 8680
MUNDI COLOR

EUROPEAN LIFE

SELF DRIVE HOLIDAYS, SHORT BREAKS & LONGER STAYS

Charming, Chateaux and Hotels of character for the romantic.

Touring itineraries through beautiful regions for the explorer.

Theme Parks of Europe for families.

2 nights from only £99 per person including ferry.

FRANCE - SWITZERLAND
ITALY - AUSTRIA - GERMANY
HOLLAND - BELGIUM

Call Brochure Line on
0113 2050255
Opening 9am to 11pm

PURE CRETE

Spring flowers, breathtaking views and empty beaches. Discover Western Crete from self-catering village houses and farms.

Tel: 0181 760 0879
info@pure-crete.com

INDIA

TRANS PAK LIMITED
The leading India specialist for quality holidays offering:

- Excellent group tours
- First class independent travellers
- Travel made fun
- Travel between India and the UK

For our latest brochure call: 0181 566 2729
or fax 0181 566 5327
or write to: Trans Pak India Limited
11 The Pavement, York YO1 1JF
Tel: 01904 310000
ATOL 425 ATOL 425

GREEK ISLANDS CLUB

30 years of arranging individual villa holidays for those who expect privacy, comfort, personal service and beautiful surroundings. Our brochure features the more unspoiled and uncrowded Greek island retreats.

Tel: 0181 568 6338
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

MADIRA

Specialist in the best quality holiday homes in the sun. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry.

Tel: 0181 847 4748 (24 hrs)
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

Forthcoming Features

Greece Sunday 14th Feb
France Sat/Sunday 27/28th Feb
Cornwall Sunday 14th March
Spain Sat 20th March
Lake District Sat 27th March
Turkey Sat 17th April

IRELAND

Love a different life
HOLIDAYS '99

Ireland's tourist boards south and north have put together 'Come to stay in B&B or on a cruise. And experience Ireland's famous welcome, warm weather too. For our colour brochures, call free on 0800 55 55 99
http://irelandtravel.co.uk

The highest quality escorted walking holidays in Europe

01865 315665

ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL GROUP
69-71 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE
ATOL 2010

Cuba

Nine great Mediterranean Beach Clubs and fabulous new Caribbean Club.

Free diving sailing, windsurfing, yachting, tennis and kids clubs plus water skiing.

Caribbean from \$645
Med from \$445

Call Sunair
01705 222 222

CADOGAN HOLIDAYS

Specialist in the best quality holiday homes in the sun. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry.

Tel: 0181 847 4748 (24 hrs)
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

On the 27/28 February 1999

The Independent and The Independent on Sunday will be publishing an editorial feature, focusing on France.

To book your advertisement or brochure panel please call the Travel Team on 0171 293 2335/2327.

Caribbean

Style Direct's new Caribbean brochure features our widest selection of holidays ever. With more than 50 hotels in seven sun-drenched destinations, all at affordable prices, there's never been a better time to visit the Caribbean. Our new brochure, which features flights from Gatwick, also includes Millennium prices. Call 0181 568 1999 or 0161 839 6111 to order your Style Direct brochure now.

ATOL 1498 ATOL 3443

Tapestry Holidays

Tapestry Holidays take great pride in providing a specialist, knowledgeable and personalised service. We offer a wide variety of coastal and special interest holidays in the "Real Britain". Please feel welcome to call for a copy of our current brochure and any relevant special offers.

0181 235 7888

14 destinations

ALGARVE - COMINO - CYPRUS - GERMANY - GREECE - JERSEY - MADRID - MALAGA - MALTA - MENORCA - PORTO - PORTO CANNO - SPAIN - TENERIFE

All our tailor-made award-winning holidays include scheduled flights, flexible durations and the very finest hotel accommodation. All backed by our pledge never to be beaten on price.

CADOGAN HOLIDAYS
Tel: 0181 785 1234

Planning a summer holiday to Malta or Gozo?

If the answer is yes, give Malta Direct Travel a call on 0181 785 3233 or brochure freephone 0800 181 374.

Prices start from £185 per adult and FREE child places are available. Flight only from £125. Early saver discounts of up to £40 on selected properties are also offered and departures are available from 10 airports.

MALTA DIRECT TRAVEL
ATOL 628 An Air Malta Co. ATOL 122

OKAVANGO TOURS & SAFARIS

Simply the best for tailored holidays in:

BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA, MALAWI, NAMIBIA, ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, TANZANIA, INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS, MADAGASCAR, UGANDA

Tel: 0181 343 3283

See our website: <http://www.okavango.com>
email: info@okavango.com
Gadd House, Arcadia Avenue, London N3 2TJ

Ireland

Farmhouse Holidays
Self-Catering Cottages
Caravan Touring
Horse Riding
Fishing Holidays
Golfing Holidays
Short Breaks
Coach Tours

Phone now for our new 1999 colour brochure
0151 734 5200

SPRING IN ORKNEY

Visit Orkney this Spring and sample the delights of these 70 islands at their best. You'll find a wide choice of accommodation, wonderful food and an abundance of wildlife in some of the most beautiful landscapes. Above all you'll find a warm Orkney welcome.

Call 01856 872856 for a copy of our 1999 brochure.

JERSEY'S

CREME DE LA CREME
Enjoy a tailor-made package for the luxury of Jersey's finest hotels, including a scheduled flight from your local airport, or by sea on a Condor high-speed car ferry. All backed by our pledge never to be beaten on price.

CADOGAN HOLIDAYS
Tel: 0181 785 1234

Wake up to the real Greece.

White washed houses, brightly coloured boats, hot days and warm smiles - the Greece of your dreams is still a reality.

We have traditional villas and apartments in the villages of Paros and Stromboli and on the islands of Rhodes, Lefkada, Corfu, Zakynthos, Lefkada, Ios and Olympos. Flights from Gatwick, Manchester and Glasgow.

Phone now for a free brochure.
0181 785 1234

EXPLORE ASIA WITH

Orion Magic Holidays

From the most popular resorts of Majorca / Mallorca or to the more relaxing resorts of Minorca / Menorca. Call D'or Holidays office for a wide range of Apartments, Hotels, Villas. All with Pools.

Phone from 6.12pm: 01293 433 238
01293 433 238

CADOGAN HOLIDAYS

Specialist in the best quality holiday homes in the sun. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry. Sunair is a leading name in the holiday home industry.

Tel: 0181 847 4748 (24 hrs)
ATOL 122 ATOL 1110 ATOL 1110

NORTHUMBRIA

A land of magnificent beaches, castles and countryside. Discover Hadrian's Wall, Durham Cathedral and Beamish Museum. Explore exciting cities for shopping and culture. FREE Northumbria Tourist Board Guide.

Telephone: 0990 502 220 (24hrs)
quote ref: 106

COLOURS OF INDIA

Exclusively created journeys to the subcontinent by Partnership Travel Ltd. Beaches and Backwaters, Castles and Culture, Temples and Towns.

Tel: 0181 343 3446
Gadd House, Arcadia Avenue, London N3 2TJ
ATOL 5136

EXODUS

Exodus are the UK's leaders in small group adventure travel with 25 years' experience and the widest choice of trips: 1-4 week escorted cultural trips, safaris, easy walks and biking tours to off the beaten track destinations in over 70 countries worldwide.

ATOL/ATOL fully bonded
Tel: 24-hr brochure line 0181 678 0650

Great Breaks in North Wales

North Wales has everything you could want - beautiful scenery, history, culture and an exciting range of attractions and accommodation. Send for your FREE Great Breaks Brochure now or phone 0800 214614

WAYMARK HOLIDAYS

Waymark specialise in walking holidays in Europe and North America. Accommodation in comfortable hotels with half or full board. Flights and leadership included.

Phone 01753 691404
(24 hours) For brochure ATOL 684

MADIRA

All our tailor-made award-winning holidays include scheduled flights, flexible durations and the very finest hotel accommodation. All backed by our pledge never to be beaten on price.

CADOGAN HOLIDAYS
Tel: 0181 785 1234

To receive up to 8 of the brochures featured in the Brochure panel, please indicate the brochure numbers in the boxes provided below:

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

Please return to: Independent (06/02/99), 1 Upcott Avenue, Brompton, SW3 1HN. Or fax your request to 0171 320 422. Coupons to arrive by 20/2/99.

USA

Ontario. Far from still life photography.

Ontario. The perfect blend of action-packed, stylish cities and remarkable natural wonders. It is a land of stunning contrasts. Toronto, full of vitality, culture and history, is home to the world's tallest building - the CN Tower - and the start of the longest street in the world. The lively cities give way to breathtaking countryside, stunning lakes and the awe-inspiring spectacles of Niagara Falls and the Algonquin Provincial Park - a nature reserve almost the size of Wales. In fact, there's so much more to discover in Ontario, you'll dream of returning again and again to capture more of its many and varied wonders.

All Canada TRAVEL HOLIDAYS

For more information, or to speak to someone who has actually travelled in Ontario call
0990 434 434
Quote ref: IS1

ONTARIO
www.ontario.co.uk

Latin America

Australia

Caribbean

Far East

THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper Publishing plc regrets that although every reasonable precaution is taken, no responsibility can be accepted for flights and/or accommodation offered through these columns, or any loss arising therefrom. Readers are advised to take all necessary precautions before entering into any travel arrangements.

USA

Ontario. Far from still life photography.

Ontario. The perfect blend of action-packed, stylish cities and remarkable natural wonders. It is a land of stunning contrasts. Toronto, full of vitality, culture and history, is home to the world's tallest building - the CN Tower - and the start of the longest street in the world. The lively cities give way to breathtaking countryside, stunning lakes and the awe-inspiring spectacles of Niagara Falls and the Algonquin Provincial Park - a nature reserve almost the size of Wales. In fact, there's so much more to discover in Ontario, you'll dream of returning again and again to capture more of its many and varied wonders.

All Canada TRAVEL HOLIDAYS

For more information, or to speak to someone who has actually travelled in Ontario call
0990 434 434
Quote ref: IS1

ONTARIO
www.ontario.co.uk

Latin America

Australia

Caribbean

Far East

THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper Publishing plc regrets that although every reasonable precaution is taken, no responsibility can be accepted for flights and/or accommodation offered through these columns, or any loss arising therefrom. Readers are advised to take all necessary precautions before entering into any travel arrangements.

A high point of the Alps

A favourite with the elite, Garmisch-Partenkirchen is still to be discovered by the masses. By Stephen Wood

It was the Nazis who made Garmisch-Partenkirchen a big name in the skiing world. There had been skiing and ski-jumping in the area around the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, since the beginning of the century, but it was the decision to hold the 1936 Winter Olympics there that made the resort's name - Hitler ordered that the neighbouring Bavarian villages of Garmisch and Partenkirchen should be joined together, with a hyphen, to organise the games - and led to the creation of many of its winter-sports facilities.

The U-shaped arena at the bottom of the ski-jumps survives in its original form, the grandstands not quite tall enough to be truly triumphant but none the less heroic in their fascist detailing. The huge ice rink remains, too, although it has been extensively remodelled. Garmisch-Partenkirchen's skiing reputation lives on thanks to its annual staging of a blue-ribbon event in the World Cup racing series. And the resort has become a member of the elite Best of the Alps association, grouping it with such posh places as Cortina, Davos and St Moritz.

Yet Garmisch-Partenkirchen - to save ink, let's call it GP - has not caught on with British skiers. Whereas in other established European resorts one would expect to see Britons first or second in the list of visitor nationalities, in GP we fall far behind the top two, the USA and, astonishingly, Japan. As far as I am aware, the only British tour operator offering ski packages there, in a couple of pages of its standard brochure, is the Leicester-based German specialist, Moswin Tours.

With the advent of Go's £80 Stansted-Munich return flights, however, it's easy and cheap enough to go skiing in GP without the help of a tour operator. Regular trains from the airport go into Munich's main station, from which there is an hourly service to GP (the journey takes about 80 minutes). And right alongside GP's main station is the terminus of the Zugspitzbahn, a mountain railway



running almost to the peak. The weekend before last, I set off for a couple of days' skiing there. The P part of the resort, Partenkirchen, lay on the old coaching route south from Munich across the Alps to Austria and Italy. On the eastern side of the valley through which it passed is a mountain - and small ski area - called Wank (which doesn't amuse the Germans, but gave me some solitary pleasure); to the south-west is the range which climbs towards the 2,628m Zugspitze, whose vast east-facing snow slope dominates the skyline, and up to the 2,964m Zugspitze peak.

Having arrived late on Friday, I spent Saturday on the larger of GP's two separate main ski areas, which runs off the side of the Zugspitze. Served by three cable-cars, all close to stations on the Zugspitzbahn, it is dominated by red runs, either wide and easy pitches below the lifts or pistes which sweep down through the forest. The best of the descents, however, is a black, the Kandahar piste used for the annual World Cup downhill race.

Although the descents - especially the Kandahar - were great fun, it was the wrong weekend to ski the wider pitches, what with a "children ski free" promotion and the German pharmacists' annual skiing championship. Dodging chemists and kids, I headed up to the top of the ski area to find a far more entertaining hazard: dogs. An avalanche rescue team was introducing its trainees

suffers-and-diggers to drag-lift techniques. The advanced dogs endured their obvious embarrassment at being wrapped around the handlers' shoulders; the beginners suffered the greater shame of being carried in a bright-pink contraption somewhere between a waistcoat and a handbag.

I talked to one of the handlers after he had been knocked off the lift by a squirming young pup. The drag-lift training was, he said, "very difficult". For him or the dogs? "Both," he replied, in a tired voice.

For Sunday's skiing, I took the early train to the Zugspitze. (I did ask about the coincidence - Zugspitze translates as "Train Peak" - and was told that it was no more than that.) The train rattles along the valley at a good speed; but to get a grip on the steep part it engages a cog wheel with a sort of metal ladder set between the rails, and grinds its way slowly up the 1400m ascent. The whole laborious commuter trip - of 17km - took 80 minutes, almost as long as the Stansted-Munich flight.

The ski area on the Zugspitze glacier offers superb views. But it is small: even a languid skier would cover it in the time taken for a return journey on the Zugspitzbahn. And the skiing is all easy red runs and well-used off-piste slopes - with one notable exception. Although I do not suffer from vertigo, I had some of the symptoms on the area's one rickety chair-lift, hanging off a rockface with Austria, just across the border, spread out below; and I felt the others when it dropped me at the end of a ridge, with steep descents on three sides. The black run off the ridge is also heart-in-mouth stuff at the top; but after a steep and narrow runway, it turns into a wide mogul pitch which is amusing rather than threatening.

There are other compensations for the long train journey. A swift cable-car (crowded, on my trip, with sightseers from Japan, for whom the Zugspitzbahn station signs appear thoughtfully in Japanese script) takes you up to the Zugspitze peak, whose black-house tourist centre's attractions include a panoramic viewing gallery, an excellent restaurant and, curiously, an art gallery. It's hard to imagine what could compete with the view from the windows; certainly the four blue Perspex blocks installed by Roni Horn couldn't. Still, it was an experience: I have never clumped around an art gallery in ski boots before.



Lithograph poster from 1936 advertising the Olympics

Christie's, South Kensington

An art form indigenous to GP, of frescos painted on building facades, was far more diverting. I spent most of my non-skiing time wandering around the resort admiring biblical scenes and architectural flourishes (fake windows with wistful women looking out are popular).

Even modern suburban homes have the odd knight on horseback brightening up side walls, and I spotted one house on which a superb trompe-l'oeil facade showed workmen finishing off its construction, with a madonna and child on top of the scaffolding apparently supervising the plasterers and hod-carriers.

That alone was worth the trip. I understand now, however, why ski-tour operators don't offer GP in their brochures: with such a limited ski area, it wouldn't provide a week's entertainment - except for those who share my new enthusiasm

for *hifimalerei* (literally, "outside painting"). But for a weekend's skiing, it's perfect.

Stephen Wood paid £80 for a flight to Munich with Go (0845 60 54321). The train to the resort costs DM72 (£26). A one-day ski-pass for all Garmisch-Partenkirchen areas except the Zugspitze costs DM62 (£22), for the Zugspitze DM61 (£22, including train ticket). For Moswin Tours, call 0116-271 9922. A sale of vintage ski posters, such as the one pictured here, takes place at Christie's (0171-581 7611) on 25 Feb

SOMETHING TO DECLARE

NEWS FROM THE TRAVEL WORLD

True or false? Norfolk, Virginia, has two international airports. True. As with many American cities, the home of the US Navy enjoys the choice of two airports: Norfolk International, a six-mile drive north-east from the city centre (for which the airport shuttle bus will charge \$13), and Patrick Kelly International, 12 miles north. The former is usually used for diversions of international flights.

Other cities where you may be surprised to find not one but two airports include Houston (Intercontinental and Hobby), Dallas (DFW and Love Field) and Chicago (O'Hare and Midway). Your problems get worse if you are trying to find the right airport in New York (three) and Los Angeles (six).

One thing that all these airports have in common is that, in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration rules, boarding an aircraft while under the influence of alcohol is not permitted.

Bargain of the week Montego Bay, Jamaica. Airtours (01706 232324) is selling a last-minute deal departing from Gatwick at 9.25am tomorrow. Seven nights at the fully inclusive Sunset beach resort costs £748. The charter flight is due to arrive in Montego Bay at 2.50pm, according to the normal flight plan.

Trouble spot: Jamaica Latest Foreign Office advice. Most visitors enjoy trouble-free holidays at resorts. Vigilance is still advisable outside the safety of your hotel. Be alert for bag-snatchers and pickpockets. Do not carry valuables, large amounts of cash or travel documents unnecessarily. Visitors are advised against walking at night or using public transport. Exercise caution when walking in isolated areas even in daylight hours. Do not offer resistance in the event of an attempted robbery.

One woman and her dogs

Christine Campbell travelled across the frozen Canadian wilderness by the same means as the first pioneers - with snow-shoes, skis and a team of badly behaved huskies

"WHOA. KAWNIS! Whoa, Pacquini!" Our instructor had said: "Control of the dogs is by voice." My team of four Siberian huskies, however, hurried along a path of their own, oblivious to every command. We were at the end of a 15km dog-sledding trek, and this was a moment of full-velocity pleasure at the end of a three-day excursion into the Algonquin wilderness.

Five of us had left a very wet Toronto two days previously for the four-hour drive north. The plan was to follow in the snowy

footsteps of northern native peoples, using techniques adopted by early European settlers. In the warmth of the van, Angie, our driver, described the activities planned for each day: snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, and dog-sledding.

We turned off the main road for the last 10km of our journey, driving over snow and ice-covered dirt-tracks to the cabin which would be our base. This was sufficiently off the beaten track to be without electricity,

so there was no hot water, all lighting was by kerosene and paraffin lamps, and water was pumped up from the lake through holes in the ice. But wood-burning stoves and the kitchen range made it ideal for defrosting after the activities Angie and her partner in cold, Scott, had in store for us.

The first day we snow-shoed. Made of ash and often laced with moose hide, the shoes allow you to walk on soft snow without sinking; it took a few minutes of awkward shuffling and tripping over to get used to them, but we soon established a rhythm and headed into the woods north of the lodge. A swathe of boreal forest traverses Ontario and is home to an abundance of animals.

At first, our laughter must have warned the wildlife off, but soon we were silenced by the stillness and beauty of the forest, and snow-shoed quietly through the fresh snow - thigh-deep in places - for several miles. Approaching a beaver dam in the evening darkness, we heard the splash of a beaver by the riverbank, and found a six-foot pine tree lying across the path: it had obviously just been gnawed down and was being dragged to the dam. When we skied past the next morning, the job had been completed.

The third day's dog-sledding was the highlight of the trip. Leaving early, we drove to Raven's Watch, a 70-dog kennel. The noise was deafening. The dogs were already in teams of four, harnessed in ganglines, and desperate to run. These were Siberian huskies, graceful and intelligent dogs with

erect ears and a dense, soft coat. One person per sled, four dogs per person, with a guide in front and behind us. The first few minutes were dizzyingly fast, and in the adrenalin rush I clung on tightly and tried to remember any of what I'd just been taught. At this point, the dogs were merely intent on catching up with the team in front, allowing me time to remember to keep breathing, and find a comfortable position on the runners.

We spent an exhilarating few hours mushing along snow-covered trails, gaining confidence in commanding our teams as we took corners with a cry of "gee" or "haw". Going uphill we jumped off and ran with the sled in order to relieve the weight for the dogs, then a few seconds later we were back on board, hunched down on the brake and trying to slow down so that the same sled wouldn't catch the hind legs of the dogs as we sped downhill.

On the last evening, we took a moonlit trip out to an island near the centre of the frozen lake, some on skis, some on snowshoes. An almost full moon in a cloudless and starry sky reflected off the snow, and I stayed outside long after the others had gone back, listening to the water flowing from the beaver dam a mile or so away, and watching the moon sink below the treeline.

Christine Campbell paid C\$395 (£160) for the three-day trip, including food, accommodation and travel from Toronto, through Voyager Quest (001 416 486 3605)

THE INDEPENDENT

We've got you covered from under £52

The likelihood is that you may take several trips away in the course of a year whether it be for business or holiday or both. A week in the summer, say? Perhaps a short city break on the continent? A weekend champagne trip to stock up on your wine? Or maybe a skiing holiday to your favourite Alpine resort?

Every time you go away the insurance costs mount up - unless you have an annual insurance policy. And, if you don't have annual cover then there's the bother of arranging cover each and every time.

The Independent Annual Travel Insurance, arranged with General Accident who are one of the biggest and best known names in insurance, will save you not only money but time too, providing cover for any number of holidays each of up to 31 days duration during the year. The policy provides cover for one spirit holiday of up to 17 days duration. Two versions of the policy are available, one for Europe and one for Worldwide cover: there are individual rates (age 16 - 64 years), and rates for a family comprising 2 adults and 2 children (age 2 - 15 years inclusive).

Extended cover includes:

Holiday cancellation up to £3,000

Medical expenses up to £250,000

Personal accident £250,000

Personal baggage up to £1,500



Competitive Rates - Holiday Cover	
Individual cover	
Europe only	£51.59
Worldwide	£58.95
Family cover	
Europe only	£164.89
Worldwide	£166.20
Competitive Rates - Holiday & Business Cover Only	
Individual cover	
Europe	£97.44
Worldwide	£137.56
Family cover	
Europe	£131.34
Worldwide	£194.87

RING THE INSURANCE HOTLINE ON 0800 551 881 quote special reference INT242.

Alternatively complete the coupon and return it to: Independent Annual Holiday Insurance Offer, FREEPOST, General Accident, Glasgow G64 1BR.

Please send me further information on the Independent Annual Travel Insurance.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

SEND TO: Independent Annual Holiday Insurance Offer, FREEPOST, General Accident, Glasgow G64 1BR.

Please tick the box if you do not wish to receive future offers from Independent or from companies associated with Independent. Newspaper Publishing Ltd is registered in England No 1100807. 01742

SNOW REPORTS in association with WorldCover Direct

SKI HOTLINE
Detailed independent snow and weather reports from 180 resorts

First, obtain the access code for the resort of your choice. Phone or Fax 0870 51 00 843 (the fax lists codes for 180 resorts)

To listen to the latest snow and weather report: Phone 0901 47 70 051 + code

For a fax copy of the latest snow and weather report: Fax 0906 55 00 086 + code

SKI HOTLINE SNAPSHOT
A detailed four-page summary of conditions in 180 resorts. Fax 0906 55 00 801

Helpline: 0870 51 33 345
Calls to 0901 cost 50p per min. 0906 cost £1 per min. 0870 calls are standard national rate.

On or off piste, with WorldCover you're covered.

0800 365 121
ONE CALL AND YOU'RE COVERED

www.worldcover.com The report ad

WORLD COVER TRAVEL INSURANCE

Costa Rica
Sun-soaked accommodation with en-suite rain forest

Lush and fertile Costa Rica provides not only the typical pursuits expected in a Caribbean and Pacific location but its' natural panorama of white-water rivers, volcanoes and rain forests teeming with wildlife provide a diversity of tropical splendour unequalled across the globe.

This 7 night tour unlocks some of the finest treasures on Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast.

Day 1. Fly from London to San Jose with British Airways.

Day 2. Visit Brindley National Park, ride the aerial tram through the forest canopy, visit Puerto Viejo on the Caribbean coast. Stay at the Pura Vida Hotel for the next 3 days.

Day 3. A day at leisure to relax or explore.

Day 4. After breakfast, visit the Gandoca Humbird Wildlife Refuge and the indigenous Peoples Reserve. Return to the hotel for dinner.

Day 5. Learn from Puerto Viejo for a scenic ride on the Tortuguero Canal.

Day 6. Visit the Tortuguero National Park and see one of the most important nesting grounds for the Green Sea Turtle in the western Caribbean.

Day 7. After breakfast return by boat to Puerto Viejo. Lunch in Gandoca then onto San Jose and your hotel.

Day 8. Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK.

For reservations and more information call: 0181 222 7844, e-mail: red@shaper-jervis.com or contact your travel agent.

HAVES and NEWS A World of Experience

TEL: 0171 293 2222

OVERSEAS

Take Off Take Off Take Off Take Off Take Off

WORLDWIDE TAILORMADE HOTELS CAR HIRE TRAVEL INSURANCE TOURS CRUISES

CURRENT BEST BUYS ON THE WORLD'S FINEST AIRLINES

INCLUDES ALL TAXES	ONE WAY RETURN FROM	ONE WAY RETURN FROM	ONE WAY RETURN FROM		
SYDNEY	£308 £545	NEW YORK	£122 £165	CARIBBEAN	£265 £265
PERTH	£306 £449	BOSTON	£135 £165	MEXICO CITY	£258 £351
AUCKLAND	£306 £532	WASHINGTON	£135 £170	RIO	£323 £417
BANGKOK	£218 £361	CHICAGO	£122 £183	JO'BURG	£231 £301
HONG KONG	£287 £355	FLORIDA	£155 £188	CAPE TOWN	£231 £339
SINGAPORE	£251 £362	LOS ANGELES	£222 £224	NAIROBI	£247 £285
BALI	£279 £383	SAN FRANCISCO	£222 £222	DUBAI	£182 £239
TOKYO	£260 £444	TORONTO	£153 £153	CAIRO	£143 £195
INDIA	£212 £369	VANCOUVER	£200 £200	AROUND THE WORLD	£707

PLUS DISCOUNTED QUALITY ACCOMMODATION PER ROOM PER NIGHT FROM

AUSTRALIA £29 • USA £34 • AFRICA £39 • PACIFIC £46 • ASIA £20

USA CAR HIRE FROM £21 PER DAY

CALL NOW FOR OUR TAILORMADE WORLDWIDE OR NORTH AMERICA BROCHURES

TRAILFINDERS DOES NOT IMPOSE CHARGES ON CREDIT CARDS

NO INSURANCE FEE FOR FULL PROTECTION AGAINST AIRLINE INSOLVENCY - CAA APPROVED

OUR TRAVEL CENTRES ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

TRAILFINDERS THE TRAVEL EXPERTS

**LOWEST FARES TO AUSTRALIA
ON QUALITY SCHEDULED AIRLINES
FROM £449 RETURN**

FOR DEPARTURES NOW - 30 JUNE

**PLUS AUS\$50 WORTH OF TRAVEL VOUCHERS
TO SPEND IN AUSTRALIA**

FOR YOUR
FREE COPY OF
THE TRAILFINDER
MAGAZINE CALL
0171 938 3366
ANYTIME

ATOL 1458 IATA ABTA 67701

**USA from
£174 p.p.
with US Airways
PLUS £30 OFF***

Car Hire, Hotels or Insurance

*£30 PER BOOKING BASED ON
2 ADULTS TRAVELLING TOGETHER
Departures to 20 March 99

**FLIGHTS
DIRECT**

CAR HIRE • INSURANCE
HOTELS • AUSTRALIAN VISAS

0870 7500 140

Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm

WE GO FURTHER TO
FIND THE BEST FLIGHT

Thomas Cook

Return prices with other airlines
including prepaid airport taxes from:

Paris	£449	Dubai	£235
Sydney	£444	Doha	£310
Auckland	£520*	Chicago	£177
Bangkok	£352	Osaka	£187
Hong Kong	£350	Los Angeles	£223
Tokyo	£333	San Francisco	£223
Singapore	£364	Toronto	£162
Johannesburg	£299	Rio de Janeiro	£409
Cape Town	£349	Round the World	£688

* Depart 12 Apr - 30 Jun 99
If Depart 12/04 - 25/06/99, return 14/04 - 20/06/99.
Prices are subject to change/availability. Calls are recorded.
© Thomas Cook Group Ltd. 0800 770014, 0203 0203

**LOW
COST ANNUAL
TRAVEL INSURANCE**

39

Award Winning
THOMAS COOK GROUP
0300 0188 747

LOW COST FLIGHTS

USA CANADA AUSTRALIA
NEW ZEALAND SOUTH AMERICA
CARIBBEAN FAR EAST
MIDDLE EAST AFRICA

**THIRTYWAY
TRAVEL**

0171 480 1480

NEXUS TRAVEL

01273 626242

Zurich

3 flights a day... **£39** single

www.easyJet.com

0870 6000000

£39 rtn
Aberdeen, Edinburgh
Glasgow, Manchester
Newcastle

£78 rtn
Amsterdam, Brussels
Paris

£99 rtn
Düsseldorf, Milan
Oslo, Rome

£110 rtn
Frankfurt

Call 0990 074 074,
contact your local travel agent
or see Teletext page 373.

KLM uk

From all over the UK,
to all over the world.

£24

0171-375 0011
COLUMBUS

Who lets you
take as many
holidays as
you like...

CGU Direct

Take out our low price
annual travel insurance
once, and you're covered
for the rest of the year.
Tell your boss bye-bye.

0800 121 007

Quote: PC507
Open 7 days a week.

**Coffee and croissant
from just £79***

Offer includes return Eurostar ticket to Paris
and one night's accommodation.

That's right. You really can make a holiday trip to Paris, with
one night's accommodation and breakfast included
from just £79 per person*. Offer must end 14 March.
so don't just sit there, pick up the phone.

For a brochure call: 0845 07 70 777

*Terms and Conditions: Based on two people sharing a twin room. Offer strictly non-refundable or exchangeable and relates to standard travel class only. Bookings must be made by 7 March and travel completed by 14 March 1999 (excluding 9-12 & 12-14 February 1999). £79 price relates to travel up to 24 February 1999. Midweek and specified trains only. Calls charged at local rate. Eurostar Holidays Direct ABTA No 2118.

**Preferential
TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Comprehensive Annual Multi-trip Cover from £45

01702 423 393

At calls may be monitored/recorded. Details, conditions & exclusions may apply.

MOTORAIL

To AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND, ITALY and the South of FRANCE

156 Blackburn Road
London SE1 8EN

Tel: 0171 593 2332
Fax: 0171 593 2333

Please specify country of destination

Bruges

City Centre
150 years old
Comfortable, well
furnished apartment
with free parking.
Free colour brochure.
Phone 01502 502 605

HOLIDAYERS

June 1998 - June 2000

Travel Services

**SKI
INSURANCE**

Europe
5 days £18
10 days £22
17 days £28
ages 16 - 65
Underwritten at Lloyd's

0800 316 55 20

City Breaks

**Brigitte
Encounters**

Refresh your
senses on a
weekend away and
reacquaint yourself
with the person who
means most to you.

A COMPLIMENTARY BOTTLE
OF SHAMPOO AT SELECTED
HOTELS OVER
VALENTINE'S WEEKEND.

BE INSPIRED...
0181 987 6108

www.britte-encounters.com
ABTA 11327, ATOL 1932, AITO

**Beautiful Cities,
Big Country,
British Columbia.**

See the best of Canada's West. Visit
Vancouver and Victoria for street cafes,
theatres, galleries and music scene. While
the magnificent Inside Passage and
National Parks of the Canadian Rockies
will take your breath away.

Come to BC - for the Best of Canada.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA
Fly/Drive
from
£1139**

13 days/16 nights, double occupancy
Direct through spectacular
Vancouver, Victoria, Vancouver
Island, the Inside Passage and the
National Parks of the Canadian Rockies.

Includes
Return airfare, Car Hire and
Accommodation

**FOR A FREE HOLIDAY PACK
CALL 0800 210 214
quoting reference B1N
or visit our website
http://www.britishcolumbia.com**

CANADA
Discover our true Nature.

**FRANCE • SPAIN
PORTUGAL • FLORIDA**

**OVER 700 VILLAS
IN PRIME LOCATIONS**

FOR A FREE COLOUR
BROCHURE PHONE
01235 824325

GERMANY
from **£83** rtn

HOLLAND
from **£52** rtn

NORWAY
from **£93** rtn

SWEDEN
from **£93** rtn

DENMARK
from **£84** rtn

From Harwich to Hamburg or Esbjerg or from Newcastle to
Hamburg, Kristiansund, Gothenburg or Amsterdam (Amsterdam).
Take your car across from an extra £58 return. Comfortable
cabins, bars, restaurants, kids club, cinemas and shops.
For details and bookings please call quoting 09025
0990 333 666 SCANDINAVIAN SEAWAYS

REBEL

AGAINST INFLATED AIRFARES

Shannon - Ireland one-way from **£29**

Brussels one-way from **£39**

Copenhagen, Barcelona, Madrid, Milan, Nice, Rome one-way from **£49**

Book 24 hours per day on the Internet:
www.virgin-express.com

Or ask your travel agent to make your
reservation, or call us 7 days a week:
(0171) 744 0004

**Virgin
Express**

YOUR RIGHT TO FLY FOR LESS

Departures are from Gatwick, Heathrow & Luton. All destinations are via
Gatwick (except Shannon). Prices are one-way, subject to availability and
British Airways terms. Flights must be purchased 21 days in advance (except
Shannon). Reservations are non-refundable and cannot be changed. Seats
are limited and may not be available on all flights.

THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper Publishing plc
regrets that although every
reasonable precaution is taken,
no responsibility can be
accepted for flights and/or
accommodation offered
through these columns, or any
loss arising therefrom. Readers
are advised to take all
necessary precautions before
entering into any travel
arrangements.

Corsica

**UNIQUE
HOLIDAYS IN
CORSICA**

Corsica Holidays Line
01242 240 310

VFB

VFB Holidays Ltd (LTD)
Cheltenham GL50 3PT
www.vfb.co.uk

**CORSICA
SARDINIA
& CYPRUS**

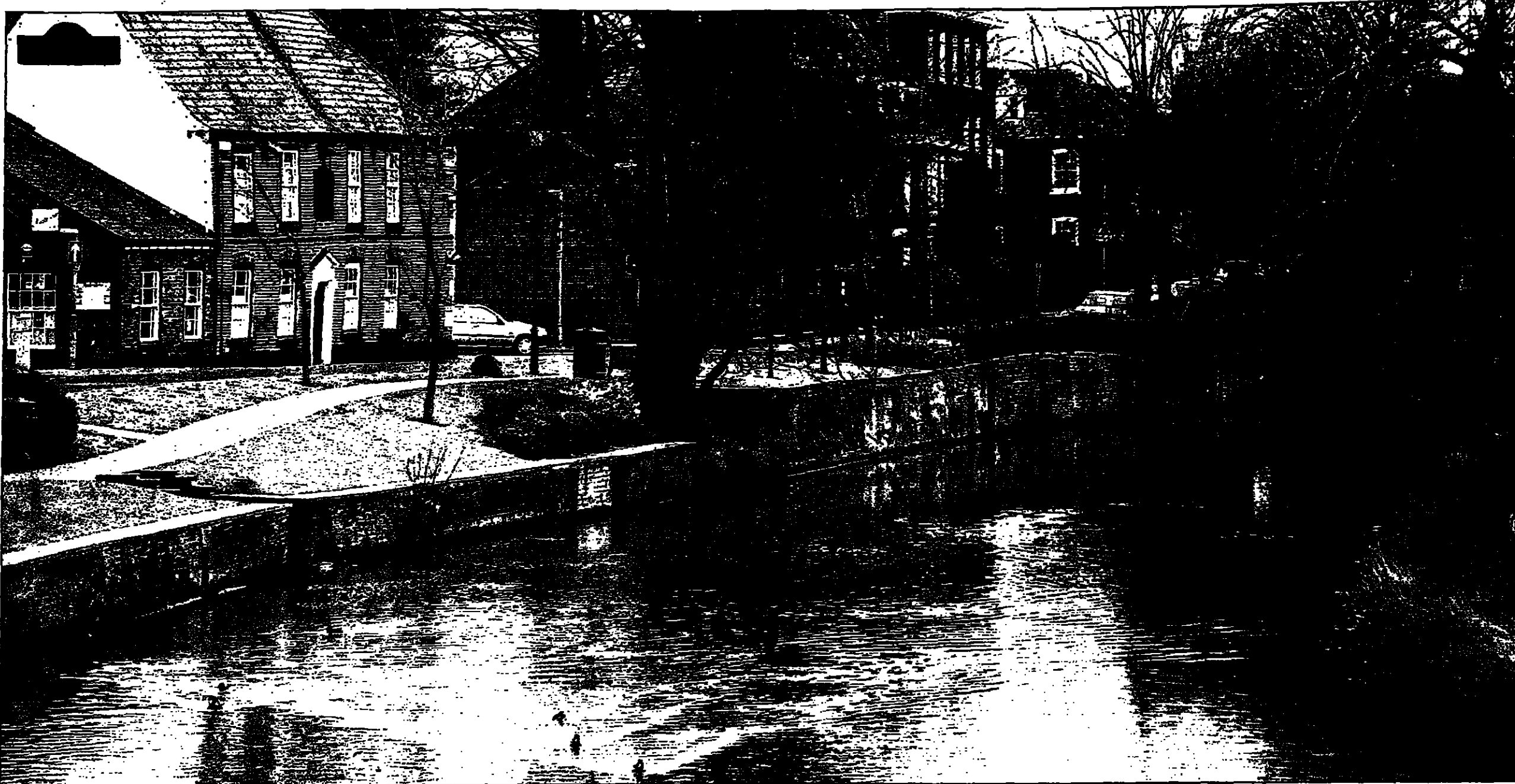
Big holiday packages from
£279

Hotels, Villas &
Appartements. Tailor-made
calls for a brochure
0800 731732
www.corsica.co.uk

The Corsican Specialist

CORSICAN PLACES

Locally owned and run, inside
Corsica, medieval village, historic
Castello, superb views. Very
friendly personal service.
01424 460046
www.corsica.co.uk
ATOL 2847



A river runs through it: Spalding in Lincolnshire is worth visiting not only for the splendid Springfields flower show, but also for the almost Dutch charm of the town itself

Geoffrey Roy

Tiptoe through the tulips

You don't have to go to Holland to get a taste of spring – in Spalding there are multi-coloured flowers galore. By Geoffrey Roy

WE may be in the throes of winter but, for flower fans, there is a chance to sample a taste of spring – and you don't need to travel as far as the Netherlands to catch it. As a matter of fact, you need travel no further afield than the Lincolnshire Fens to find Britain's very own Spring Garden of Europe. This weekend, Spalding hosts the Springfields '99 flower show, where thousands of daffodils, hyacinths, tulips and numerous other flowering bulbs and shrubs will provide an extravaganza of colour under one roof.

Although Spalding and the surrounding area is known as "South

Holland", the "Holland" part of the name does not allude to the tulips which were once abundant here but, rather, is a reference to the Anglo-Saxon word for high ground. Despite this confusion, Spalding itself has a very Dutch feel. The town lies astride the River Welland, which sweeps through the town in a deep tidal channel and gives this sleepy little place much of its character.

Armed with a copy of the Tourist Board's Spalding Town Walk Guide (20p), I set off to explore. From earliest times, the River Welland brought trade to the area, corn and potatoes flowing out, timber and coal flowing in. Snuggled within the precincts of the town, the banks of the river are lined with dignified

Georgian houses, old warehouses and mills, and modern structures which are in keeping with the town's ambience and make a walk along the river's edge a pleasure. Numerous Victorian footbridges span the river along the way, making access to both sides easy.

As land was gradually reclaimed from the marshes in this area, thanks would often be given by building a church. These religious buildings would then become the focus of surrounding farms, often developing into the centrepiece of a growing town. This is obviously the case in Spalding and the parish church of St Mary and St Nicolas, medieval in origin but with a distinctly Norman feel to it. Sadly, modern progress has added to the

town's architecture in the shape of a modern supermarket building at Spalding's heart.

One of the largest attractions in the area, however, is the bulb fields and people have been travelling to Spalding since before the Second World War on organised tours to revel in the beauty of Lincolnshire's bulb fields. Over the last hundred years, since flowers began to be grown commercially, Lincolnshire's bulb fields have grown substantially from a smallholding of 500 acres in 1900, selling exclusively to London's Covent Garden, to more than 10,000 acres producing 25,000 boxes of daffodils a day and selling throughout the world.

"Tulipomania" raged in the Netherlands from 1634 to 1637, when

an Admiral van Enkhuysen bulb, one of the rarest and most beautiful tulips, could fetch 5,400 guilders – about 15 years' wages for the average Dutch worker of the time – but tulips didn't arrive in Lincolnshire until 1907 when Frederick Culpin brought in 100 bulbs of six different varieties and established the British tulip fields. When tulips were at the peak of their popularity there were about 3,000 acres growing but today the tulip fields have diminished to little more than 300 acres.

The first flower-hunting excursions here began as long ago as 1935, when the area had over 300 visitors arriving from London by train and bus to witness the coming of spring. By 1949, more than 100,000 people were coming in more than 100

coaches and 6-7,000 cars to explore the area. Special daily sightseeing routes were established to enable the visitors to see the best of the day's blooming flowers.

The bulb season in the Fens begins with the Springfields show and ends with the Spalding Flower Parade and Spring Festival in the first week of May. The Springfields flower show started up in 1966 with the purpose of the study and proper cultivation of flowers grown from bulbs and corms. For the last 23 years, there have also been displays, and the appeal of the Springfields displays stems undoubtedly from the chance they offer to flush away the winter blues with a passage into spring through the bulb fields of Lincolnshire.

Springfields '99, a 12,000sqft display of landscaped beds of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, flowering shrubs and miscellaneous bulbs, takes place this weekend from 11am to 5pm. Admission costs £2.50 for adults and is free for under-16s. There is wheelchair access and there will be restaurants and bars open all weekend.

From about 4pm on Sunday, all the flowers on display are sold off. To get there, take the A1 to Peterborough, then follow the A1139 to Eye Green where you should follow the A1073 through Crowland and Cowbit to Spalding. Directions to the Springfields Exhibition Hall will be signposted. For information call 01775 713233 or consult the website: www.d-l.co.uk.

FLOWER FESTIVALS OF BRITAIN

Lacock Abbey

This 13th-century abbey, near to Chippenham, nestles in the midst of Wiltshire's chalky hills. Lacock itself is an attractively traditional village that has timber-and-plaster houses and grid-mapped streets included in its territory, and the abbey is the place to head for if you're in search of snowdrops.

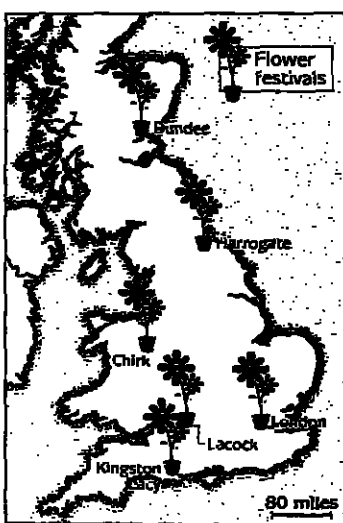
This is the perfect time of year to visit the surrounding Victorian woods as snowdrops cover the ground – a welcome reminder that spring is on the way – and other flowers bloom throughout the cloistered gardens. Over the next few months you may catch sight of *Crocus vernus*, aconites, fritillaries and, later, daffodils.

On 13 and 14 and 20 and 21 February, from noon until 5pm, the gardens and woods will be opening specially to raise money for the National Gardens Scheme. Admission: £1.80 for adults, free for children. For further details call 01249 730459.

Harrogate Spring Flower Show

This Victorian spa town is sombre yet elegant, with dark stone buildings, a large, grassy parkland known as the "Stray" and numerous cosy tea rooms. These features make the town an ideal location for the spring flower show, which boasts the largest daffodil display in the north of England. The show also includes an early tulip display, numerous other flower arrangements, and stalls from more than 80 nurseries.

The event takes place at the Great Yorkshire Show Ground from 23 to 25 April. Admission: £8-£10, with a £2 reduction for those who book before 16 April. Opening times are 9.30am to 5.30pm, except for 25 April when doors will be closing at 4.30pm. For further information call 01423 561049.



May is the time to find a corner of London in bloom

London Orchid Show Unlike likely though it may seem for dedicated flower fans, it's worth wending your way through the noisy streets, the petrol-perfumed air and the battles of finding your way around London. In addition to the Chelsea Flower Show in May, this year the capital is to host an elite orchid event in March.

Both traditional orchids and hybrid varieties will be on show in the exotic displays, and many of the plants – which originate from locations all over the world – will be available to buy at the show.

The London Orchid Show takes place at the Royal Horticultural Society, New Hall, London SW1 on 20 and 21 March from 10am to 5pm. Entrance: £5 on Saturday, £3 on Sunday. RHS members get in free. For tickets call 0171-316 4707.

Dundee Spring Show

As in London, the hustle and bustle of Dundee needs only to be peeled back a little to reveal a second – and rather more flowery – skin. This year sees Dundee launch its ninth flower show, with a focus on spring



May is the time to find a corner of London in bloom

blooms, but visitors will have to wait until April to enjoy the displays. Expect to see a tremendous array of April flowers, including daffodils, tulips and various cut "Spring Collections".

The Dundee Spring Show takes place at Old Glamis Road, Dundee on 3 and 4 April. It will be open from 10.30am to 5.30pm on Saturday and 11am to 5pm on Sunday. Admission: £1.50 for adults and £1 for concessions. For further information, call 01382 434500.

Chirk Castle

This great, gaunt castle stands austere on the outskirts of Chirk, a former principal staging-post on the route to Ireland, situated between the industrial town of Wrexham and the Iron Age hill fort of Old Oswestry. Every spring the grounds play host to a proliferation of daffodils, which lead the visitor all the way up to an 18th-century statue of Hercules.

There will be special openings of the grounds to enjoy the spring flowers, on 13 and 14 and 20 and 21 March. Opening

hours will be from noon to 4pm with the last admissions at 3.30pm. Entrance: £1.50 for adults and 75p for children on these dates, or £2.60 and £1.30 respectively afterwards. Chirk Castle is situated outside Wrexham in North Wales. For further details call 01691 777701.

Kingston Lacy

Situated near Wimborne Minster, a civilised coastal town in Dorset that is home to narrow streets, Georgian houses and an imposing Norman church, this grand National Trust property is a springtime mecca for snowdrop-lovers.

Admiring the Lady Walk blanketed by delicate snowdrops has become something of a tradition for such people, and special weekend openings have been organised for the purpose – but you'll have to hurry. The final snowdrop weekend ends tomorrow so, for final glimpses, pay a visit between 11am and 4pm on 6 or 7 February.

Entrance: £2.50 for adults, £1.25 for children, and free for members. For more information call 01202 880413.

BEATRICE HODGKIN

Go Dutch in Europe's finest kitchen garden

Keukenhof in Holland is the world's largest bulb-flower garden and a paean to the bloom that drives men mad. By Geoffrey Roy

THINK OF tulips and you think of the Netherlands. When the Dutch think of tulips (bearing in mind that they have some 15,000 sq km of bulb fields netting about 1,330 million pounds worth of export trade), they think of Keukenhof near Lisse, about 45km south-west of Amsterdam.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Keukenhof, which literally means "kitchen garden". A group of prominent bulb growers established the site in 1949 to convert ordinary Dutch people to the joys of growing flowers from bulbs in their own gardens. Keukenhof is situated on an estate that once belonged to a 15th-century countess who used to grow herbs and vegetables for her dining table here – hence the name – and it is now deemed to be the world's largest bulb-flower garden. With 80 acres of tulips (some 6 million), daffodils, hyacinths, and other flowering bulbs, flowering shrubs, ancient trees and beautiful ponds and fountains, Keukenhof is referred to as the Spring Garden of Europe.

Strolling around the landscaped gardens is an absolute delight, even for those not interested in gardening and horticulture. Flower-beds glimmer with the sheer abundance of colour as each variety of tulip presents its spring-time blush and, nestled amongst the more common ones, are many of the rarest species.

Tulips originated in Asia in a belt that extends eastward from Ankara in Turkey, through Yerevan and Baku to Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent, and on to the Pamir-Alai and Tien Shan Mountains in China's



Spring-time blush of the Dutch national flower

central-Asian province of Xinjiang. There are now about 120 naturally growing species spread throughout the Old World.

Ancient trade routes caused the tulip to spread its flowers westward, but tulips didn't arrive in Europe until bulbs were brought from Constantinople to Antwerp in 1562. Today, there are more than 5,500 different tulips listed in the *Classified List and International Register of Tulip Names* (published by the Royal General Bulb-growers Association of the Netherlands).

As part of this year's show at Keukenhof, there will be 10 changing indoor flower exhibitions or parades; seven themed gardens; a corn mill; and, for children, a special "Bollebozen" or "Whiz-kids" route through the gardens, a maze, animal pasture and play area. There will also be a music garden where you can enjoy smaller bulbflowers and trees to the sound of music.

If you're planning a visit, the 10 temporary flower exhibitions, or so-

called parades, are: amaryllis, freesias and hyacinths from 26 March to 6 April; orchids from 26 March to 7 April; tulips and irises from 29 April to 13 May; narcissi (daffodils) from 22 to 28 April; roses from 9 to 15 April; special bulbous plants from 30 April to 10 May; *Ailanthus* from 14 to 24 May; and carnations and summer-flowering plants from 15 to 24 May.

The Keukenhof Gardens are at Stationsweg, 166a, Lisse, and are open daily from 25 March to 19 May from 8am to 7.30pm. Try to arrive early to beat the tour buses. Admission is £18 for adults and £9 for four to 12 year-olds. There are three restaurants on site and cash machines available. Wheelchairs and push-chairs are available free of charge. For further information, call 00 31 252 465 555 or email info@keukenhof.nl. There is also a website at: www.keukenhof.nl



48 hours ... in San Francisco

You need a break – and a shortcut to the soul of a city. Ten years ago *The Independent* launched 48 hours, the prescription for the perfect weekend break. The idea has been often imitated but never equalled. This week Stuart Price is in San Francisco

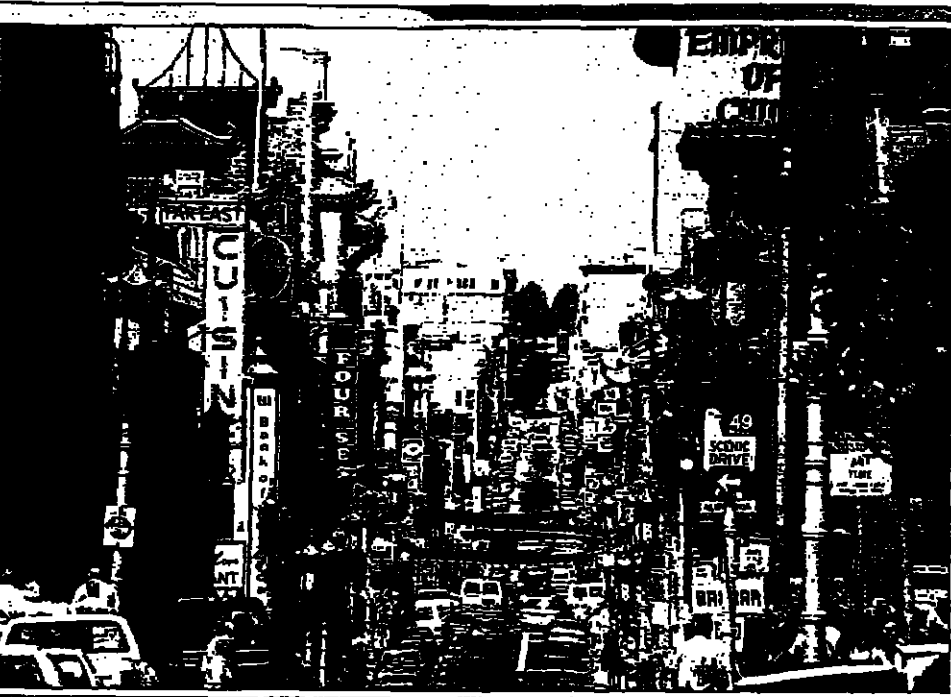
Why go now?
Because air fares are at silly prices (barely more than £200 through discount agencies), the weather is better than the UK (and always will be) and because it's stunningly beautiful. Another appealing factor is the price. It's a reassuringly economical city, certainly cheaper now than in Gold Rush times, when the easy wealth of the city saw eggs selling for up to \$50 a dozen and whiskey for \$30 a quart.

Get your bearings
Maps of this neat and compact city (which divides conveniently into a number of different neighbourhoods) are available everywhere in San Francisco. Also pick up a Bay City guide, which is free in the newspaper bins on most street corners.

Beam down
A cab ride from the airport to downtown San Francisco is around £18, a door-to-door hotel shuttle service costs around £6 and a stretch limo will cost anything up to £60.

Check in
The tourist hotels are centred downtown around Union Square, scene of the film *The Conversation*. At upwards of £90 a night, there is the St Francis (335 Powell, 001 415 397 7000), where Sara Jane Moore attempted to assassinate President Ford in 1975. There are also plenty of middle-bracket hotels for £55-£75, including the Commodore (825 Sutter, 001 407 740 6442) and the Bessford (635 Sutter, 001 415 673 9900). For more economical accommodation, the Geary (510 Geary, 001 415 673 9221) is clean and friendly with rooms for around £25 a night.

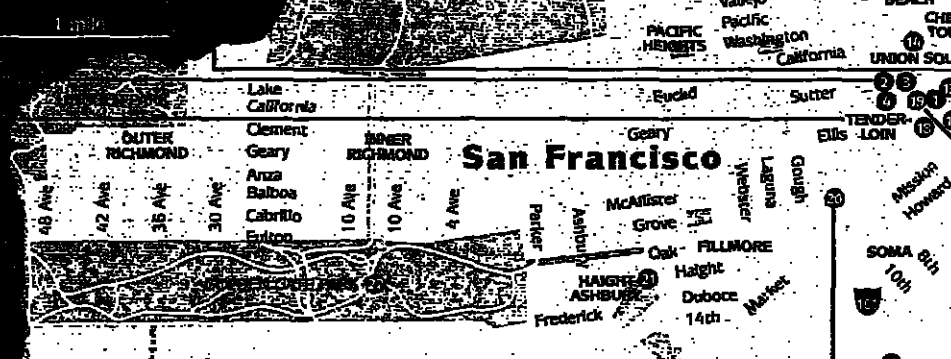
Watch out for...
Earthquakes. San Francisco is due for another shake some time in the next 30 years. For smokers there are more immediate problems: the city has a zero-tolerance smoking ban everywhere, and many hotels no longer provide smoking guest rooms. Some bars do ignore the ban but restaurants uphold it. And, finally, you may want to give Tenderloin a miss. Not in the carnivorous sense but in the urban – this is the name for half a dozen blocks slap in the city centre known for their uninviting shabbiness, litter-strewn streets, flophouses, and the lively local trade in drugs and prostitution.



Union Square, San Francisco

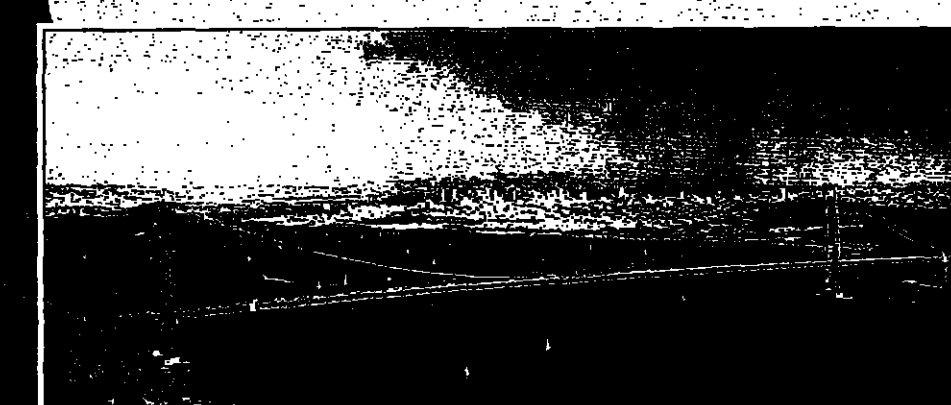
Take a ride
San Francisco is a city of hills, and the best way to get over them is by cable car, so take a £1.20 ride from downtown to Fisherman's Wharf. This is the only city in the world with a revenue-earning cable-car system. It's easy to see why, as, short of a motorbike, it's probably the most dangerous transport there is: passengers hang by their fingertips off the sides and alighting points are in the middle of busy four-way junctions.

Lunch on the run
San Franciscans spend more per capita eating out than any other city residents in the US. The fact that the food is generally good quality, even at 99c burger joints like Jack in The Box (400 Geary Street, 001 415 673 0868), probably explains why. For lunch, try one of almost 20 bagel types and a fizzying mocha at the Sonoma Valley Bagel Company (Sutter and Grant, 001 415 951 0133).



Map of San Francisco

A walk in the park
For many, Haight Ashbury is still a centre for love and peace – the Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin houses are all within easy walking distance. The local houses, shops and cafes wear this heritage proudly – Victorian-style clapboard houses in streaks of purple, orange, pink and blue, are decorated with tie-dyed curtains and psychedelic artwork – and the area has managed to maintain the village feel it had when the hippies moved in, with antique bookshops, vintage clothing emporiums, "record" shops, body art, and chimes. Designer label stores still sit comfortably beside discount depots. Haight Street finishes at Golden Gate Park, the largest expanse of green in San Francisco.



Golden Gate Bridge with San Francisco in background

Take a hike
If you get sick of the seagulls, bird shit and clam chowder of tourist-heavy Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz prison island sits a mile's uncomfortable ferry journey out from here. Buy an audio tour ticket for "The Rock" from Pier 39. This tour of the cell-block from inmates and correctional officers is informative, atmospheric and well-researched. Many of the miserable stories about prison life here aren't exactly true. While it was certainly maximum security, prisoners apparently had such luxuries as hot water – but this may have been to stop them becoming too acclimatised to the feel of cold water. From some of the cells, you can see San Francisco bathed in light: "There was never a day when you didn't see what you were missing," says one inmate.

Window shopping
Forget window shopping: San Francisco is a place to spend. Union Square is the shopping centre for over-priced apparel, while for the more discerning buyer, Ross (Market and 3rd) sells half-price Calvin Klein underwear, mostly in sizes for midgies or Sumo wrestlers. Market Street is San Francisco's Oxford Street, with purveyors of Levi's for £18 and up, cheap sunglasses, consumer electronics, ghastly T-shirts and fake IDs. Cold cash speaks very loudly here. If you can't find what you're looking for, many mainstream designers have factory outlets in the SOMA district. One of the largest thrift shops around is Thrift Town (Mission at 17th), where Hawaiian shirts go for less than £3. In fact, almost everything here goes for less than £3.

Cultural afternoon
Take an afternoon to visit the idiosyncratic-looking Museum of Modern Art (3rd and Mission, 001 415 357 4000). The gallery has a collection of more than 18,000 works it uses to put together permanent collection shows, including the current on-going Matisse exhibition, as well as major Abstract Expressionist paintings from Jackson Pollock and Clyfford Still. The museum is also strong on German Expressionism, Fauvism and Mexican works.

An aperitif
There are two kinds of places to take a quick snifter: North Beach hangouts and "view lounges" where you can sip your drinks and survey the city scenery both at the same time. Three great high-rise lounges stand out. Ignore the often soulless atmosphere and the prices at the 39th floor of the Marriott (Fourth and Market, 001 415 896 1500), the Grand Hyatt (on Union Square, 001 415 398 1234), and Top of the Mark (California at Mason, 001 415 392 3434) and marvel at simply stunning views. Alternatively, drop in at the old beat poet bars at Columbus Avenue and Broadway, Tosca (001 415 986 9651), with its red booths and opera-influenced jukebox, holds out the hope of catching celebs such as Tom Waits, Robin Williams and Francis Ford Coppola. Opposite is Vesuvio (001 415 362 3370) where Jack Kerouac and Dylan Thomas soaked at the bar, while Spec's (12 Adler Alley, 001 415 421 4112) is suitably dingy.

Bracing brunch
For those who can stomach it, you can eat breakfast or lunch 24 hours a day around Union Square. Diners such as Lori's (Fifties influenced, but solid food, 001 415 392 8646) and the Pine Crest Diner (a bit greasy, but well-patronised by locals, 001 415 885 6407) serve pretty much anything at anytime.

The icing on the cake
Walk – or crawl, by this time – up Telegraph Hill to Coit Tower for the best city views. Lillie Coit built the tower and dedicated it to the earthquake fire-fighters of 1906. The phallic tower resembles a fire-hose nozzle, and local history has it that Lillie admired the San Francisco firemen and their hoses for more than their fire-fighting abilities. The inside of the tower features Social Realist murals painted in the Thirties by WPA painters under the direction of Mexican artist Diego Rivera. Art, sexual provocation and beauty in one – no wonder Billy Graham hesitates to preach about heaven.

Demure dinner
Pick anywhere in North Beach for Italian, or Chinatown for Chinese food. Brandy Ho's (Columbus Avenue, 001 415 788 7527) serves fantastic Hunan cuisine, while the Italian restaurants clustered around Columbus and Broadway are so Italian even the soap in the washrooms smells of basil and olive oil. For a downtown meal with a literary tinge, John's Grill (63 Ellis, 001 415 986 0069) is where crime writer Dashiell Hammett regularly took lunch. The "Sam Spade Chops" are touristically priced at £14.



Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill

Sunday morning: go to church
For those who believe that politics is the new religion, a visit to the recently renovated City Hall is a must. Reopened this January after the 1989 earthquake damaged the building, this to many San Franciscans is the true meaning of resurrection and rebirth. In 1978, Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk were assassinated here in their offices. Its gold-leafed dome, which sits a few feet higher than the Capitol in Washington DC, was built to be the tallest in the US.



San Francisco skyline

GLOBAL AGENDA

New York
Christie's first skiing poster sale last February proved so successful – with most of the early-20th-century posters attaining prices far higher than their estimates – that the second sale (25 February) is making the headlines. Whether this reflects a rampant nostalgia for stylish holiday resorts or a growing appreciation of classic graphic design (see picture) is anyone's guess, but many buyers may well be paying a visit to Cooper-Hewitt's "Graphic Design in the Mechanical Age", a selection of more than 200 posters, paintings, drawings, collages and ephemera from the 1920s and 1930s. Works by Jan Tschichold, Alexander Rodchenko and the Stenberg brothers, among others, will be on view, and preliminary designs will be on show alongside finished pieces. Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2 East 91st Street, New York, New York, USA (001 212 849 8400) 9 February-23 May, \$3-55

Santa Cruz de Tenerife
Anyone seeking a little winter sunshine in the Canaries this month will have the added diversion of the "Santa Cruz de Tenerife Carnival", which

attracts hundreds of troupes of musicians and dancers to entertain locals and tourists alike. Following the election of the Carnival Queen on 10 February, there will be parades, dancing, live bands – and, on 17 February, something called "the burial of the sardine"... Various locations, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain (00 34 922 24 0500), to 21 February, free

San Francisco
The 85 paintings, drawings, photographs and sculptures brought together in the exhibition "Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation" are the work of women associated with or influenced by the surrealist movement. The pieces, dating from 1928 to 1966, are by such artists as Louise Bourgeois, Frida Kahlo, Cindy Sherman and Marjet Oppenheim, and reflect their authors' rejection of the passive role of object of the

(male) gaze which has been propagated traditionally throughout art history. The self-representation here is a celebration of the reappropriation and recreation of the depiction of the feminine self. Its spirit resonates through contemporary art today. Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third Street, San Francisco, California, USA (00 1 415 357 4000) to 20 April, \$4-8

Sydney
Since its foundation in 1978 as part of a commemoration of the Stonewall Riots in New York, the "Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras" has grown to become one of the largest gay and lesbian arts festivals in the world, with over 80 community, cultural and political events to keep fun at a premium. To qualify for a ticket to the extravagant last-night party, you need to become an international member of the Mardi Gras, but anyone can hit the streets on Saturday 27 February to enjoy the outrageous costumes of the night-time Parade. Various locations, Sydney, Australia (00 61 2 9557 4332 or http://www.mardigras.com.au/ for membership and ticket details) to 27 February. Party tickets cost AU\$70

THE FRENCH are the lucky ones. When they disembark from the Eurostar from Paris and cross Waterloo Bridge, they get the finest prospect of London's latest five-star hotel – whose name is its address. One Aldwych occupies a funny wedge on the edge of Aldwych, the semi-circle that separates Covent Garden from Fleet Street. The premises are suitably grand for an Edwardian hotel – but in fact the building, Iverek House, was designed as a home for the Morning Post, a now-defunct national newspaper. The swimming pool in the basement of the hotel was where the presses were located, and it is flanked by massive steel supports.

From the street, passers-by gawp in at the hotel through the huge windows into the former Advertisement Hall. It is now a lobby bar, where high-profile guests like Mick Hucknall, Robbie Williams and Roger Moore may loll in high-backed chairs. "A hotel that freshens the mind" was the driving concept for the One Aldwych's creator and managing director, Gordon Campbell Grey.

I'm not saying that the place is modern, but I couldn't decide if the object to the left of the reception desk was (a) sculpture or (b) a hi-tech lateral radiator or (c) a bench. No one yelled when I sat on it to survey the clean lines, clear spaces and elaborate staircase, so I assume it was the latter.

ARE YOU LYING COMFORTABLY?
Beds: minimum of 6ft wide, with four plump pillows and an eight-inch mattress designed by Hypnos. "The first thing that we sell is a good night's sleep," says Campbell Grey. Non-smoking rooms are available. The best among the 105 rooms is a two-bedroom

range of whooshing and clunking hydraulic noises that sounds like the soundtrack from *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

KEEPING IN TOUCH
Television: the five terrestrial channels plus CNN, MTV, Sky and others
Radio: yes, along with a classy CD player
Fax: a machine will be brought to your room on demand
Internet: bring your own laptop, and plug it into the ISDN socket if required
Phone: a three-minute local call costs 75p
Switchboard: the average time that the phone rang on three occasions was 10 seconds. Hold music – "Steve McQueen" CD by Prefab Sprout.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION
One Aldwych, London WC2B 4BZ (0171-300 0500); sales@onealdwych.co.uk
Transport: a bit of an Underground black-hole, with an awkward 10-minute hike from the five nearest tube stations: Charing Cross, Holborn, Covent Garden, Temple or Waterloo
Time to Heathrow: 35 minutes if you get a good cab run to Paddington for the Heathrow Express
Time to Waterloo International: three minutes by cab or bus

THE BOTTOM LINE
A double room, including VAT and service, is £180.80; English breakfast in bed is an additional £16.50 each, with 12.5 per cent optional service charge.
To cut the cost by £130, stay on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday night before 1 April, so you qualify for the "Brief Affair" rate of £220 including breakfast.

SIMON CALDER

MODERN MANNERS: YOUR CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE MINEFIELD

Dear Serena

Dear Serena,
I seem to have caused offence to a large group of people who, until recently, had very little ability to fight back. But they have recently equipped themselves with powerful and vocal lobby groups. As a result, I have already lost my job, but they seem still to be after my blood. Can you suggest the best way to put things right?

Glenn, Lancaster Gate

There's very little you can do to put it right, but a grovelling apology might be a good place to start. Try something like: "I am a Christian, and believe in reincarnation. The fact that I am unable to open my mouth without putting my foot in it is obviously intended by some higher power. I must have been a contentious prat in a previous life. It is karma."

Dear Serena,
I am 37, unmarried and two months pregnant. The father is currently

being good about it, though I'm not sure if we're going to stay together as our history isn't entirely smooth and we were on the verge of calling it a day when this happened. I am going to go ahead with having the baby regardless, as I am afraid that time is getting tight and this might be my last chance to have a child, at least by someone for whom I have feelings. I am certainly able to cope financially, but there is one problem. How do I tell my overprotective Catholic parents? I can't believe that I have this problem at my age, but they still see me as an irresponsible adolescent despite the fact that I have been running a multinational company for the last six years.

Millie, Hertford

Of course they still think of you as an irresponsible adolescent: they are your parents. However you break this news to them, they will continue to think that you are an irresponsible adolescent. They will probably think (or at least

persuade themselves that they think) that this child is the result of your first naive foray into sexual relations, and that you have been "caught" like so many teenagers before you. At least you have two strikes in your favour: as Catholics, they are hardly going to urge abortion and, because of your age, they have probably been nursing fears for some time now that you will never furnish them with grandchildren. You have about a month's grace to work out a plan, because it's wisest to keep stumm from all but your best friend until you're sure nothing ghastly has gone wrong. After that, you have a duty to tell

the old folk as soon as possible, as springing the news and the baby on them in short succession would probably push them into a state of total acopia. If you really can't bear to tell them face to face, make the most of your position at work. Wait until you have to go to Los Angeles, then call from your hotel room where they can't track you down and say "Mum, dad, I'm in Los Angeles and I'm going to have a baby in October. I'll be back in two weeks and we can discuss it then." Then slam the phone down so you won't be too guilt-ridden by the sound of their screams.

Dear Serena,
How do you like your coffee?

Kenneth, Tyne and Wear
Smooth, strong and rich,

with just a hint of decadence. Forget the feel of velvet and silk, as velvet has always tended to make me gag. And never serve it instant from a jar, or your party full of advertising trends will look very quizzical indeed.

Dear Serena,
My friend Belinda has been going on about her wonderful new man Marcus for months, and we were all dying to meet him. Imagine my horror when we bumped into each other in the street one day and it turned out that Marcus was someone I had a disastrous one-night stand with 10 years ago and was relieved to have never heard from again. He showed no signs of recognising me, so maybe the secret is safe. Or should I tell her? What do you think?

Mandy, Exeter

Under no circumstances, unless he did something like steal your credit cards or torture your cat. Belinda will not appreciate knowing that you know what

her dream lover is like in bed, and he will no doubt have been as keen to forget the whole incident as you were. And don't spend too much time feeling smug about our little secret: remember, if the sex was disastrous, it's just as likely to have been you as him that got it wrong.

Dear Serena,
Is it reasonable to ask a boyfriend/husband to buy tampons?

Richard, Acton

Only if he's passing one of the larger branches of a major chain chemist. Any man sent to the corner shop for Women's Things has a right to refuse, or at least to demand that she buy a pack of condoms the next time she patronises the same shop.

Knotty problems with the world today? Write to Dear Serena, The Independent, 18th Floor, 1 Canada Square, London E14 4DL, where they will be treated with customary sympathy



ARIES

THE WEATHER'S been variable, at best. Now you feel you are moving into safe haven, you dirty British coasts. The good news is you'll be able to shift some pig-lead and settle some bills. There will be flashes of intuition, like a glimmering from the depths, but you may be advised to store this rather than act on it. You may feel less effective, but restraint can have more power than expression. Inner beauty may be useful after all.



TAURUS

YOU WILL know the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy". Do not give it head room. You have a talent for worry and the more you worry the more money you'll make, the nicer you'll be to your friends, the more your spouse will like you. Venus is square with Saturn and like the discipline (we needn't spin out the implications). Your loyalty, so rare these days, may be misconstrued as a fear of moving into the unknown. Beware vulgar minds. AS MERCURY goes into Pisces, the most



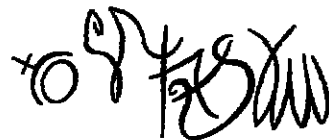
GEMINI

peculiar sign of the Zodiac, you may find your battiness gets an unwelcome burst of energy. Which head will you wear today? The warm one? Or the gay one? Or the cold, analytical one? No, the one that goes with your shoes, of course! Sensitivity to the mental processes around you give you a form of telepathy. Now you'll find out what people really think of you (uh oh). Don't protect yourself too much. YOUR EMOTIONAL meteorology looks interesting. There are sunny opportunities in



CANCER

the ridge of high pressure that's coming your way but only if you take your clothes off. Your anxieties about the way you look underneath are the worst form of egotism. There is one who will see your loveliness. An added inducement: normally you pay for this pleasure with depression, but this time you get away with it (Lord knows you deserve it). IF YOU'VE been feeling the need for a little spice in your life, here comes the tabasco. You



POPPY FOLLY

YOUR STARS: IT COULD HAPPEN

THE trouble (and you may be dubious about that singular) with Aquarians is that they preach freedom but live as prisoners, wrapped in clouds, in the heavily guarded hovel of their souls. The tops of the double-perimeter fence, where they're dressed with tiger wire, is decorated with the bodies of those who tried to penetrate the Aquarian secret. It was a fool's errand, even Aquarians don't know what the secret is, and nor would you want to if you were they.

But there are none the less a number of positive qualities, and here they are. Aquarians are assiduous name-droppers (though the name they drop most is their own), and very attentive four-weather friends (they like you better the more you bleed). Aquarians also have a very significant talent for adultery, and continually take the gold medal for infidelity - to people, ideas and political parties (Lana Turner, Harold Macmillan). Aquarians have no beliefs but



LEO

are inspired with originality, power and intelligence. It's the recipe for chaos, of course, and it may be difficult for you to manage the consequences of genius (you are more conventional than you like to admit). This foray into the higher unknown will be exhausted by the end of the week. Intelligence will be useful (it's a two-edged sword in your case). NO, YOU aren't sick, but vivid images may present themselves during the day. If you go



VIRGO

very still and trust in silence, you will find you can read the minds of those around you (this isn't something Virgos actually want to do). As your disciplines dissolve, people will see you relaxed, assume it's the real you and will tell you their secrets (the fools). Sex is strangely enjoyable (especially for someone who doesn't like strange sex). Relax. Don't do it. IF YOU have a fault (many Librans may resist this opening) it's not one that you can be



LIBRA

reproached with this week. Your tendency to drop things before they're finished, a tendency to overlook details - these characteristics are obliterated by your ruling planet's square aspect with Saturn. Now you find yourself obeying a new sense of structure, of order - and this makes you feel above-average sexy (as does the opposite, and everything in between). THOSE DESIRES you have that have no name (there are some things even you flinch from) - now is the time to approach



SCORPIO

them. Pluto, the planet of your unsavoury depths, is enjoying a lubricating aspect with Mercury, and this eases entry into your secrets. If it's hard to get in, it's harder getting out. You must tame what is wild, or at least prepare a secure area where these desires can be domesticated (when the divorce is over). WHY WON'T things go as well as you deserve? And what have you done to deserve this



SAGITTARIUS

continuing blockage? First your energy is down, you're working on three of your six cylinders, and worse, when you try and explain, it comes out all wrong. Tact has never been your thing, but just now you can't even express the truth and beauty you pride yourself on. You'll end up feeling guilty about the mess - either keep quiet or keep moving. THIS is what you've been waiting for, this aspect with Venus - even though it's seen as



CAPRICORN

negative, any connection with Venus exalts you. Where you are thought desiccated you are radiant, where you've been slandered as materialistic you are giving off a spiritual plasma. Less substantial signs fall into orbit and make you the centre of their motion; they must maintain their velocity or crash. Thus your creativity can crush those you love. IT'S QUIET Too quiet. You have the appetite for action but a strange vagueness keeps you



AQUARIUS

quiet. There is a membrane between you and the world, you are a prisoner of this prophylactic. The data you need will not be available from others, you must turn inwards, only solitary practices will reveal what you truly want (don't get caught, solitude is an eccentricity to be feared). Be careful of that which is overtaking you from the rear. A POOR aspect with Venus casts your material life in a poor light. Afflicted Pisceans (who are usually compensated for astrological

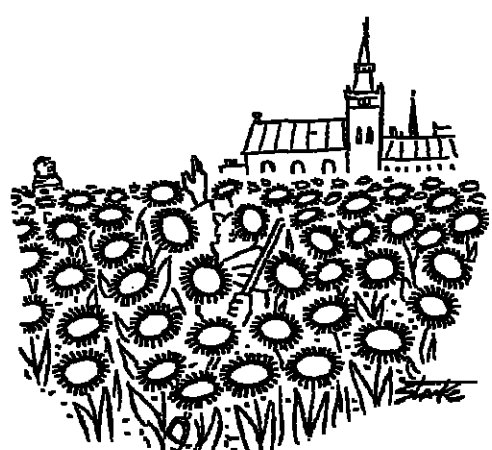


PISCES

deformity by money) will have to choose between health and wealth. Dislike of the beneficiaries named in your will may spur you to look after yourself. There will be difficulties with girls (the ones you like are difficult) but not with boys. Male Pisceans are notorious for swimming both ways (even the ones that look like pike).

CLASSIC CARTOONS

MARTIN PLIMMER ON
LESLIE STARKE



"Here I am, Dominic!"

LESLIE STARKE was a big six-footer with a concentrated vision of the world. His cartoons were neat, self-contained jewels, glowing with charm, precisely engineered to express life's small yet exquisite incidents. Starke started cartooning at the age of 36, though he had supplied caricatures to his local paper, the *Fife Herald*, as a youth. During the war, though serving in the RAF, his drawing career took off thanks to Ministry of Food advertisement

commissions, including one - thought to be the world's largest - erected across County Hall. Few jokers have ever worked on that scale, not even Ken Livingstone. Starke died in 1974. When asked in 1961 by a *Punch* reader, to describe himself, he seemed abashed at the attention, replying in tiny handwriting that he smoked, drank endless cups of coffee and lived beside the main railway line out of Euston Station: "I hope the foregoing is the kind of thing you want."

SO MANY stories and so little space to cover them in. I am reduced to taking swipes at them as they buzz past like flies, in the hope of swatting some of them.

Plum (the p is silent) has broken his wrist at school during rugby. Rugby, I thought on hearing this, is a dangerous game with few of the mitigations of soccer. But there was an extra little twist, of the sort that makes fact so much more telling than fiction: he hadn't broken his wrist while playing, but on the way to the game. He'd tripped over his own shoelace.

It means I finally stand a chance of beating him at *Goldeneye* on the *Nintendo64*, in which we race up and down corridors trying to blow each other's virtual brains out in virtual proxy. My lifelong atrophied balance has reduced dexterity and makes it a far better game. Yes, I approve of computer games; they can be mentally stimulating as part of a calorie-controlled brain diet. Some of the skills may even be transferable.

Usually, however, fact beats fiction hands down. Take my over-close encounter with the "work of art" consisting of 65 sets of traffic lights on a roundabout on the Isle of Dogs in east London. The lack of road signs led to my cheap crack about there being no doubt, somewhere, an artwork consisting of a heap of signs.

Reality beat me to it. Pierre Vivant, who perpetrated the traffic lights and who works in Paris and Oxford, has already made a pyramid out of road signs in Cardiff, which has commended itself - for



different reasons - to the city fathers, to down-and-outs and skateboarders alike. In the case of the traffic lights, philistines can still fight back. According to the Arts & Leisure department of Tower Hamlets, whose responsibility they are, the work is on probation for six months from the date of turning on (21 December 1998) in case it causes accidents.

This is the artistic imperative: if a thing is thinkable, do it and call it art. Has a sheep been seen in half? No? Do it! The critics will undoubtedly fall over each other to discover meaning in it.

This degrading of the language of art results in a peak of the public's appreciation of art in Monet, who now features on my Tesco's "bag for life". I feel the phrase *Monet Bags* might be more apt. Will we buying little

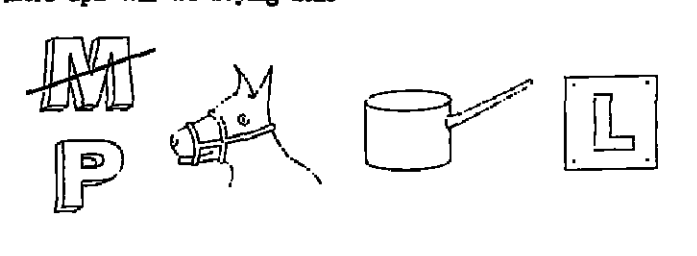
replicas of half-sheep in the new millennium? What will they put on carrier bags?

Let's hope it's both apt and representational. This rebus, sent in to *Puzzle Panel* by Mike Harrington of Lowestoft, certainly is. The BBC hasn't trailed or advertised it in new series. Maybe that's because it doesn't need to.

Points to ponder
Deleting G from RUGBY gives RUBY. Delete the middle letter of a sport to give something that happens to bacon

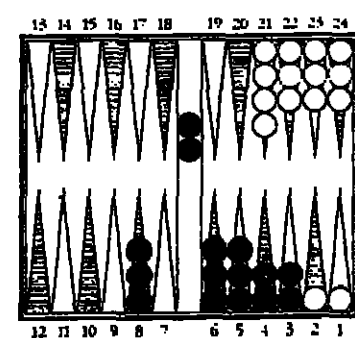
1) a sportsman to give a comic hero.
Last week's solution
1) Home & Dome must be at P & N or vice versa.
2) 65 sets of lights have a total of 6 X 8 X 8 = 384 * (keep going until you've written 8 a total of 65 times over) independent states.

Comments and contributions to independent@puzzlemaster.co.uk
Puzzle Panel, 1.30pm Fridays, 84



BACKGAMMON

CHRIS BRAY



THE FIRST week of February already an entrant for this year's "Hard Luck" award. The Ancient Woodpusher (AW) was playing a few friendly games against the Doyen (TD) when this position arose.

White is on roll. Should he double? The answer is a resounding no. White is not even the favourite in this position. If he doubles black should beaver (turn the cube to 4 and keep it on his side of the board). Even if white escapes one of his back men from black's home board and black stays on the bar he still won't have a double. However, TD did double and AW took, but didn't beaver.

TD's next two rolls were 65 played 24/18, 28/18 and 66 played 18/6(2). AW continued to

stay on the bar *ad infinitum*. Eventually he just managed to save the backgammon! AW of course had seen it all before - after all, not for nothing is part of his soubriquet "Ancient" - and he proceeded quietly on with the next game. Not for him the low-flying dice cup or the manic gesticulations of the Tempestuous Turk. He phlegmatically accepted what the fates had dealt him, and just got on with it.

The lesson to be learnt from this sorry tale is that you must remember that the only important game is the next one. By all means learn from the game that has just been completed, but don't dwell on it unnecessarily.

SUNDAY TELEVISION & RADIO

BBC1

7.25 Match of the Day (381533). 8.30 Breakfast with Frost (40303). 9.30 Heaven and Earth (79378). 10.30 Porridge (22587). 11.00 Match of the Day (2738). 11.30 Countryfile (2465). 12.00 On the Record (50858). 1.00 EastEnders (865975).

2.25 FILM In Search of the Castaways (Robert Stevenson 1982 US). Jules Verne tale starring Maurice Chevalier (T) (855910).

4.00 Are You Being Served? (755). 4.30 Masterchef 1988 (838). 5.00 News: Weather (882007). 5.20 Local News and Weather (893674). 5.25 Songs of Praise (109357).

6.00 Last of the Summer Wine. Something horrible stirs in the woods (S) (T) (804).

6.30 Antiques Roadshow. From Carnoustie, Angus. Finds include first editions of *The Beano* and *The Dandy* (S) (855582).

7.25 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen (S) (T) (855668).

7.20 Holiday Guide to... America. New York, Florida and the Pacific Coast Highway (S) (T) (191202).

8.00 The Scarlet Pimpernel. 3/3. The last of this highly disappointing adaptation of the Baroness Orczy classic. The Dauphin is being held prisoner by the Republicans. When he is captured by a masked intruder, Robespierre orders Chavellin to find the boy before news of the disappearance gets out (S) (2561).

9.30 The Lakes. More from this steamy Lakeland saga (S) (T) (848281).

10.30 News: Weather (T) (403649).

10.25 Unfinished Business. Storm about a divorced couple (S) (87281).

10.55 Fm Alan Partridge. Squirm-inducing comedy with Steve Coogan (R) (S) (T) (205738).

11.25 The Big End (S) (T) (228620).

11.55 FILM Barbarians at the Gate (Glenn Jordan 1993 US). Satire with James Garner (S) (700533).

1.35 The Sky at Night (207392). To 2am.

BBC2

8.35 French Experience (7214303). 8.30 Little Mouse on the Prairie (845842). 9.30 Alvin and the Chipmunks (853888). 9.35 Wayne Manifesto (S) (498736). 9.40 Wild House (867260). 10.05 No Sweat (808499). 10.30 Grange Hill (20729). 11.00 Kids and Cops (6735587). 11.25 Grange Hill (738674). 11.55 O Zone (807754). 12.05 The Simpsons (1334246). 12.30 Robot Wars (86465). 1.00 Around Westminster (4799). 1.30 Sunday Grandstand (80720587). 1.35 Sking (2589007). 2.00 Snooker (222533). 3.40 Racing (893804). 4.00 Rugby (8938587). 5.40 Animal Zone (5498804). 5.45 Watch Out Britain (2534668). 5.30 Chimpanzee Diary (88628).

5.50 The Natural World. A look at a typical English garden as it passes through various seasons. Narrated by Patricia Routledge (R) (S) (86849).

6.45 Sking. Hazel Irvine introduces coverage of the 1999 world alpine skiing championship from Val in Colorado, featuring the women's downhill (S) (86849).

7.30 The Money Programme. A look at the way music is sold and consumed (910).

8.00 CHOICE Bookmarks: Elizabeth Bowen - Death of the Heart. Remembers author Elizabeth Bowen. See *Profile of the Day*, below (S) (T) (879552).

8.50 Monet's Gardens (S) (86842).

9.00 A History of Alternative Comedy. Sex and censorship (S) (T) (8842).

9.30 Gimme Gimme Gimme. Tom meets a gorgeous Italian (R) (80129).

10.00 Trade Secrets (S) (T) (41475).

10.40 FILM The Van (Stephen Frears 1996 UK). Engaging adaptation of Roddy Doyle's novel about an unemployed baker who sets himself up in the fast-food business against the backdrop of Ireland's 1980 World Cup campaign (S) (T) (402674).

11.50 Snooker (S) (199587). 12.40 Tank Commandos (T) (796497). 2.00 BBC Learning Zone: Further Education - Travel and Tourism (30601). 4.00 Languages: The French Experience: 1-4 (14885). 5.00 Business and Training: Computers Don't Bite: Business - First Steps (240477). To 5.45am.

ITV LWT

6.00 GMTV (80842). 8.00 Digg (218813). 9.25 Art Attack (407867). 9.50 The Worst Witch (856991). 10.20 Extreme Ghostbusters (806382). 10.50 Sunday Morning (803753). 11.50 My Favourite Hymns (832475). 12.30 CrossTalk (278476). 12.50 News: Weather (2649736). 1.00 Jonathan Dimbleby (829738). 1.50 That's Esther (836019). 2.50 Anatomy of Disaster (255571).

3.35 FILM Bionic Showdown (Alan Levi 1989 US). Six-million-dollar man Lee Majors and bionic woman Lindsay Wagner are brought out of retirement (S) (73991).

5.25 Big Screen (8173736).

5.55 Dream Ticket. Melanie Sykes in Nashville, USA, and Nick Clarke plays polo in Wiltshire (27484).

6.25 London Tonight (485939).

6.45 ITN News: Weather (T) (166552).

7.00 Bill Bryson's Notes from a Small Island (S) (T) (2277).

7.30 Coronation Street. Hayley becomes suspicious of Roy (T) (738).

8.00 Heartbeat. Soft-focus, 1960s-set police drama. Gina finds herself accused of taking drugs as she attempts to reinstate her singing career. And following a windfall, David makes a foolish investment (S) (T) (8668).

9.00 London's Burning. Firefighting soap. Blue Watch look on helplessly as Jack's problems come to a head. And Jean has some startling news for Sickle (S) (T) (8804).

10.00 Tarrant on TV. More foreign TV with Chris Tarrant (S) (T) (36736).

10.30 ITN News: Weather (T) (263991).

10.45 CHOICE The South Bank Show. Brummie reggae band UB40. See *Documentary of the Day*, below (782755).

11.45 Faith and Music (540571). 12.15 Still in Bed with McDiarmid (2534514).

12.50 FILM Full Moon in Blue Water (Peter Masterson 1988 US). Comedy drama with Gene Hackman (498137).

2.35 Sequester 2032 (387427). To 3.25am.

Channel 4

6.40 Dog City (844882). 7.00 Magic Roundabout (343167). 7.05 Animal Alphabet (229942). 7.20 Sally's Lighthouse (26721). 7.45 Bug Alert! (255566). 8.40 City Guys (836894). 9.10 Catdog (893367). 9.45 Planet Pop (803381). 10.00 The Waltons (8007). 11.00 Holyoaks (275891). 12.30 Dishes (839173). 12.40 Dishes (803368). 1.45 Football Italia (859752). 3.30 Collectors' Lot (225464).

3.40 FILM Love Me or Leave Me (Charles Vidor 1955 US). Biopic of singer Ruth Elting starring Doris Day and James Cagney (2348587).

6.00 Time Team. Tony Robinson leads a team of archaeologists to Smalhtyne in Kent to uncover Henry V's doorknob from the time of Agincourt (T) (85552).

7.00 Remembering Jacqueline (Pré). Another chance to see Christopher Nupur's Without Walls documentary profile of cellist Jacqueline du Pré (R) (8542).

8.00 The Phil. Continuing this docu-soap about the Philharmonia Orchestra. Principal clarinetist Mike Wright plays a solo which requires bicycle clips. And principal flautist Ken Smith expresses his surprise at his mother's taste in music (T) (9910).

9.00 In Search of Law and Order. Roger Graef presents a series which looks at how the UK can import ideas from America to deal with youth crime. Tonight, he focuses on how Boston officials attempted to stem an epidemic of juvenile killings (T) (2674).

10.00 CHOICE City Hall (Harold Becker 1995 US). Political thriller starring Al Pacino, John Cusack and Bridget Fonda. See *Film of the Day*, below (S) (T) (770885).

12.05 Boyz Unlimited (R) (S) (T) (8173663). 12.35 NME Premier Live Shows (288440). 1.40 Later: Babylon 5 (R) (S) (T) (388750). 2.00 Later: Dark Skies (R) (S) (T) (210682). 2.50 Dweebz (R) (S) (820868).

3.45 FILM The Music Teacher (Gerard Corbiau 1988 Bel). Operatic drama from Belgium (383855). To 4.50am.

Channel 5

6.00 Wildlife SOS (8085007). 6.30 HavaKazoo (8894858). 7.00 Dappledawn Farm (8105303). 7.30 Milkshake! (243277). 7.35 Winzer's House (336729). 8.00 The Winner (433303). 8.30 The Revelation Game (432674). 9.00 Stuck'n' Around (4050026). 9.30 Milkbar (807680). 10.00 Mirror, Mirror (8705910). 10.30 Valley Between (4048910). 11.00 USA High (2087378). 11.30 Singled Out (2088007). 12.00 Mag (8288200). 1.00 5 News (8072810). 1.20 Frostup on Sunday (8999085). 1.50 Movie Chart Show (1144387). 2.20 Exclusive (838755). 3.30 Family Affairs Omnibus (8333885). 5.25 Serious Money (2104868).

5.55 FILM Bushwhacked (Greg Beeman 1995 US). Kooky comedy about an incompetent delivery man (Home Alone's Daniel Stern) who hides out in a scout camp when he is wrongly accused of murder (S) (T) (8661026).

7.30 5 News and Sport (S) (8570945).

8.00 Wild Secrets. Wildlife documentary. The Australian camera team of Des and Jen Bartlett take a detailed look at the world of the kangaroo (S) (T) (1492674).

9.00 FILM Seventh Floor (Ian Barry 1993 Aus). Rather odd "psychological" thriller starring Brooke Shields as a widow who takes her dead husband's place on the board of a Sydney advertising agency. But another female executive becomes jealous and schemes with the creative director to oust her from the company (S) (T) (8979457).

10.50 Wing and a Prayer. Legal drama series set in the north of England. Anna takes on a large pharmaceutical company (T) (8080533).

11.50 The Comedy Network (8302129). 12.20 Sports Talk with Steve Scott (412225). 12.50 Ice Hockey - NHL (S) (71324514). 4.40 Tbs and Fbs (R) (S) (8519559). 5.05 Move On Up (R) (S) (4693877). 5.30 Serious Money (8022392). To 6am.

ITV/Regions

BBC1 N Ireland
As BBC1 England except:
10.25 Let Me Entertain You (51735). 10.55 Unfinished Business (205736). 11.25 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 11.55 The Big End (43303). 12.25 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 12.55 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 1.25 The Sky at Night (129311). 2.30 BBC News 21 (858886).

Anglia
As LWT except: 12.00 Anglia News Sunday Supplement (878478). 12.30 Take It On (535126). 1.20 Caring Wild (82929). 3.35 Murder: She Wrote (734531). 4.30 Columbo (893324). 4.50 Wildlife Rescue (383231). 6.35 Arnie News (85668). 12.35 Still in Bed with McDiarmid (85558). 12.45 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 1.25 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 1.55 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 2.30 Highlander (898804). 3.25 Jonathan Dimbleby (820750). 4.30 Cybernet (878333). 4.40 Soundtrack (853431). 4.50 (TV) Nightcross (8804504). 5.00 Coronation Street (71750).

Central
As LWT except: 12.00 LWT News Sunday Supplement (878113). 12.45 Central News (864657). 2.30 It's Your Show (856591). 3.25 Murder: She Wrote (734531). 4.30 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 4.50 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 5.00 Heart of the Country (200). 6.30 Central News and Sport (256129). 7.00 (S) (T) (857157). 5.00 It's Your Show (71750).

HTV Wales
As LWT except: 11.50 LWT News Sunday Supplement (878113). 12.45 HTV News (864657). 1.25 Welsh Affairs (878113). 2.30 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 3.25 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 4.30 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 5.00 HTV News (85668). 12.35 Still in Bed with McDiarmid (85558). 12.45 - 5.00 As Anglia.

HTV West
As HTV Wales except: 12.55 The Sunday Roast (84783). 12.45 HTV News (864657). 1.25 On the Road (858525). 2.30 HTV Sport Men Classics (850518). 3.45 Murder: She Wrote (734531). 4.25 Phil Collins: Live in Paris (885201). 5.40 Gwyneth (852071). 6.30 West Match Plus (84553).

Meridian
As LWT except: 12.20 7 Days (878342). 12.40 Meridian News (864657). 2.30 Murder: She Wrote (734531). 3.45 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 4.30 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 5.35 Big Day Out (85736). 6.05 Monkey Business (89281). 6.35 Local News (85668). 12.45 - 5.00 As Anglia. 5.00 Fm Alan Partridge (82557).

Westcountry
As LWT except: 12.20 Weekend Match (878478). 2.50 Columbo (853235). 4.30 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 4.50 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 5.00 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 5.35 Westcountry Gulls Extra (89944). 6.35 Westcountry News (85668). 12.45 Still in Bed with McDiarmid (85558). 12.45 - 5.00 As Anglia.

Yorkshire/Type Tees
As LWT except: 12.20 Carnival '88 (878478). 2.50 Local News (844620). 2.55 Fm Alan Partridge (82557). 3.00 Coronation Street (8588). 6.00 Local News (82285). 6.35 Local News (82285). 6.45 Local News (82285). 6.55 Local News (82285). 7.00 Local News (82285). 7.10 Local News (82285). 7.20 Local News (82285). 7.30 Local News (82285). 7.40 Local News (82285). 7.50 Local News (82285). 8.00 Local News (82285). 8.10 Local News (82285). 8.20 Local News (82285). 8.30 Local News (82285). 8.40 Local News (82285). 8.50 Local News (82285). 9.00 Local News (82285). 9.10 Local News (82285). 9.20 Local News (82285). 9.30 Local News (82285). 9.40 Local News (82285). 9.50 Local News (82285). 10.00 Local News (82285). 10.10 Local News (82285). 10.20 Local News (82285). 10.30 Local News (82285). 10.40 Local News (82285). 10.50 Local News (82285). 11.00 Local News (82285). 11.10 Local News (82285). 11.20 Local News (82285). 11.30 Local News (82285). 11.40 Local News (82285). 11.50 Local News (82285). 12.00 Local News (82285). 12.10 Local News (82285). 12.20 Local News (82285). 12.30 Local News (82285). 12.40 Local News (82285). 12.50 Local News (82285). 1.00 Local News (82285). 1.10 Local News (82285). 1.20 Local News (82285). 1.30 Local News (82285). 1.40 Local News (82285). 1.50 Local News (82285). 2.00 Local News (82285). 2.10 Local News (82285). 2.20 Local News (82285). 2.30 Local News (82285). 2.40 Local News (82285). 2.50 Local News (82285). 3.00 Local News (82285). 3.10 Local News (82285). 3.20 Local News (82285). 3.30 Local News (82285). 3.40 Local News (82285). 3.50 Local News (82285). 4.00 Local News (82285). 4.10 Local News (82285). 4.20 Local News (82285). 4.30 Local News (82285). 4.40 Local News (82285). 4.50 Local News (82285). 5.00 Local News (82285). 5.10 Local News (82285). 5.20 Local News (82285). 5.30 Local News (82285). 5.40 Local News (82285). 5.50 Local News (82285). 6.00 Local News (82285). 6.10 Local News (82285). 6.20 Local News (82285). 6.30 Local News (82285). 6.40 Local News (82285). 6.50 Local News (82285). 7.00 Local News (82285). 7.10 Local News (82285). 7.20 Local News (82285). 7.30 Local News (82285). 7.40 Local News (82285). 7.50 Local News (82285). 8.00 Local News (82285). 8.10 Local News (82285). 8.20 Local News (82285). 8.30 Local News (82285). 8.40 Local News (82285). 8.50 Local News (82285). 9.00 Local News (82285). 9.10 Local News (82285). 9.20 Local News (82285). 9.30 Local News (82285). 9.40 Local News (82285). 9.50 Local News (82285). 10.00 Local News (82285). 10.10 Local News (82285). 10.20 Local News (82285). 10.30 Local News (82285). 10.40 Local News (82285). 10.50 Local News (82285). 11.00 Local News (82285). 11.10 Local News (82285). 11.20 Local News (82285). 11.30 Local News (82285). 11.40 Local News (82285). 11.50 Local News (82285). 12.00 Local News (82285). 12.10 Local News (82285). 12.20 Local News (82285). 12.30 Local News (82285). 12.40 Local News (82285). 12.50 Local News (82285). 1.00 Local News (82285). 1.10 Local News (82285). 1.20 Local News (82285). 1.30 Local News (82285). 1.40 Local News (82285). 1.50 Local News (82285). 2.00 Local News (82285). 2.10 Local News (82285). 2.20 Local News (82285). 2.30 Local News (82285). 2.40 Local News (82285). 2.50 Local News (82285). 3.00 Local News (82285). 3.10 Local News (82285). 3.20 Local News (82285). 3.30 Local News (82285). 3.40 Local News (82285). 3.50 Local News (82285). 4.00 Local News (82285). 4.10 Local News (82285). 4.20 Local News (82285). 4.30 Local News (82285). 4.40 Local News (82285). 4.50 Local News (82285). 5.00 Local News (82285). 5.10 Local News (82285). 5.20 Local News (82285). 5.30 Local News (82285). 5.40 Local News (82285). 5.50 Local News (82285). 6.00 Local News (82285). 6.10 Local News (82285). 6.20 Local News (82285). 6.30 Local News (82285). 6.40 Local News (82285). 6.50 Local News (82285). 7.00 Local News (82285). 7.10 Local News (82285). 7.20 Local News (82285). 7.30 Local News (82285). 7.40 Local News (82285). 7.50 Local News (82285). 8.00 Local News (82285). 8.10 Local News (82285). 8.20 Local News (82285). 8.30 Local News (82285). 8.40 Local News (82285). 8.50 Local News (82285). 9.00 Local News (82285). 9.10 Local News (82285). 9.20 Local News (82285). 9.30 Local News (82285). 9.40 Local News (82285). 9.50 Local News (82285). 10.00 Local News (82285). 10.10 Local News (82285). 10.20 Local News (82285). 10.30 Local News (82285). 10.40 Local News (82285). 10.50 Local News (82285). 11.00 Local News (82285). 11.10 Local News (82285). 11.20 Local News (82285). 11.30 Local News (82285). 11.40 Local News (82285). 11.50 Local News (82285). 12.00 Local News (82285). 12.10 Local News (82285). 12.20 Local News (82285). 12.30 Local News (82285). 12.40 Local News (82285). 12.50 Local News (82285). 1.00 Local News (82285). 1.10 Local News (82285). 1.20 Local News (82285). 1.30 Local News (82285). 1.40 Local News (82285). 1.50 Local News (82285). 2.00 Local News (82285). 2.10 Local News (82285). 2.20 Local News (82285). 2.30 Local News (82285). 2.40 Local News (82285). 2.50 Local News (82285). 3.00 Local News (82285). 3.10 Local News (82285). 3.20 Local News (82285). 3.30 Local News (82285). 3.40 Local News (82285). 3.50 Local News (82285). 4.00 Local News (82285). 4.10 Local News (82285). 4.20 Local News (82285). 4.30 Local News (82285). 4.40 Local News (82285). 4.50 Local News (82285). 5.00 Local News (82285). 5.10 Local News (82285). 5.20 Local News (82285). 5.30 Local News (82285). 5.40 Local News (82285). 5.50 Local News (82285). 6.00 Local News (82285). 6.10 Local News (82285). 6.20 Local News (82285). 6.30 Local News (82285). 6.40 Local News (82285). 6.50 Local News (82285). 7.00 Local News (82285). 7.10 Local News (82285). 7.20 Local News (82285). 7.30 Local News (82285). 7.40 Local News (82285). 7.50 Local News (82285). 8.00 Local News (82285). 8.10 Local News (82285). 8.20 Local News (82285). 8.30 Local News (82285). 8.40 Local News (82285). 8.50 Local News (82285). 9.00 Local News (82285). 9.10 Local News (82285). 9.20 Local News (82285). 9.30 Local News (82285). 9.40 Local News (82285). 9.50 Local News (82285). 10.00 Local News (82285). 10.10 Local News (82285). 10.20 Local News (82285). 10.30 Local News (82285). 10.40 Local News (82285). 10.50 Local News (82285). 11.00 Local News (82285). 11.10 Local News (82285). 11.20 Local News (82285). 11.30 Local News (82285). 11.40 Local News (82285). 11.50 Local News (82285). 12.00 Local News (82285). 12.10 Local News (82285). 12.20 Local News (82285). 12.30 Local News (82285). 12.40 Local News (82285). 12.50 Local News (82285). 1.00 Local News (82285). 1.10 Local News (82285). 1.20 Local News (82285). 1.30 Local News (82285). 1.40 Local News (82285). 1.50 Local News (82285). 2.00 Local News (82285). 2.10 Local News (82285). 2.20 Local News (82285). 2.30 Local News (82285). 2.40 Local News (82285). 2.50 Local News (82285). 3.00 Local News (82285). 3.10 Local News (82285). 3.20 Local News (82285). 3.30 Local News (82285). 3.40 Local News (82285). 3.50 Local News (82285). 4.00 Local News (82285). 4.10 Local News (82285). 4.20 Local News (82285). 4.30 Local News (82285). 4.40 Local News (82285). 4.50 Local News (82285). 5.00 Local News (82285). 5.10 Local News (82285). 5.20 Local News (82285). 5.30 Local News (82285). 5.40 Local News (82285). 5.50 Local News (82285). 6.00 Local News (82285). 6.10 Local News (82285). 6.20 Local News (82285). 6.30 Local News (82285). 6.40 Local News (82285). 6.50 Local News (82285). 7.00 Local News (82285). 7.10 Local News (82285). 7.20 Local News (82285). 7.30 Local News (82285). 7.40 Local News (82285). 7.50 Local News (82285). 8.00 Local News (82285). 8.10 Local News (82285). 8.20 Local News (82285). 8.30 Local News (82285). 8.40 Local News (82285). 8.50 Local News (82285). 9.00 Local News (82285). 9.10 Local News (82285). 9.20 Local News (82285). 9.30 Local News (82285). 9.40 Local News (82285). 9.50 Local News (82285). 10.00 Local News (82285). 10.10 Local News (82285). 10.20 Local News (82285). 10.30 Local News (82285). 10.40 Local News (82285). 10.50 Local News (82285). 11.00 Local News (82285). 11.10 Local News (82285). 11.20 Local News (82

SATURDAY RADIO

RADIO 1

(978-998MHz FM)
7.00 Mark Goodier. 10.00 Chris Moyles. 1.00 Lisa Anson. 3.00 Radio 1's R'n'B Chart. 5.00 Pete Tong. 7.00 Danny Rampling. Lovegroove Dance Party. 9.00 Westwood - Radio 1 Rap Show. 12.00 Radio 1 Reggae Dancehall Nite. 2.00 Essential Mix: Optical and Ed Rush. 4.00 - 6.30 Annie Nightingale.

RADIO 2

(88-90.2MHz FM)
6.00 Mo Dutta. 8.05 Brian Matthews. 10.00 Steve Wright's Saturday Show. 1.00 The Smith Lectures. 1.30 The Newly Discovered Casebook of Sherlock Holmes. 2.00 Alan Freeman. 3.30 Johnnie Walker. 5.30 Paul Gambaccini. 7.00 The American Trio. 8.00 The Dave Matthews Band in Concert. 9.00 Suzi Quatro: Rockin' with Suzi Q. 10.00 Bob Harris. 1.00 Lynn Parsons. 4.00 - 7.00 Mo Dutta.

RADIO 3

(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air. 9.00 CD Review. 12.00 Private Passions. 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. (R) 2.00 Best of 3. 3.00 Young Artists' Forum. 4.00 The Secrets of Orchestration. 5.00 Jazz Record Requests. 6.00 Jazz Century. 6.30 Opera on 3. Verdi's musical drama set in 14th-century Genoa, where patricians and plebeians are vying for power. One of the composer's most sensuously lyrical operas, with atmospheric musical seascapes and nocturnal romances and eloquent ensembles, and a convincingly rounded portrait of Boccaegra, the self-made man who rises to become doge but sacrifices himself for his daughter's happiness. With Karita Mattila, soprano (Amelia), Plácido Domingo, tenor (Adorno), Alexandru Agache, baritone (Boccaegra), and Roberto Scanduzzi, bass (Jacopo Fiesco). Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra/James Levine. Act 1. See *Pick of the Day*. 7.00 New York Stories.

PICK OF THE DAY

AN ILLUMINATING account of her last great work *Oroonoko*, Novel Encounters with Aphra Behn (2.30pm R4) examines her story of a West African prince tricked into slavery. Inspired by Behn's visit to the British colony of Surinam in 1663, we hear from a number of interested parties, including Gregory Doran, director of a stage adaptation for the RSC.

A shame they couldn't air the old one, by Southern, but Peter Tinnisswood's *The House Swap* (3pm R4) justifies its slot: shades of Chekhov, Laurie Lee and Edward Albee hang over this tale of marital disaffection, which stars Penelope Wilton. Tonight's Opera on 3 (6.30pm R3), Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*, stars Plácido Domingo (right). DOMINIC CAVENTISSE



7.30 Simon Boccanegra, Act 2. 8.25 The Met Opera Quiz. Martin Bernheimer puts listeners' questions to John Ardoin, Spight Jenkins and Michelle Krikel. 8.55 Simon Boccanegra, Act 3. 10.05 The Brain Trust. Leading thinkers tackle challenging questions sent in by listeners. Joining Joan Bakewell are scientist Paul Davies, historian Orlando Figes, theologian Angela Tilby and professor of political theory David McLellan. 10.50 Bingham Quartet. Tchaikovsky: String Quartet No 3 in E flat minor, Op 30. (R) 11.30 Jazz on 3. 1.00 - 6.00 Through the Night.

RADIO 4 (92.4-94.5MHz FM)
6.00 News Briefing. 6.05 Sports Desk. 6.30 Open Country. 6.57 Weather. 7.00 Today. 8.00 Home Truths. 10.00 News: Loose Ends. 11.00 News: Food Programme. 11.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 12.00 News: Money Box. 12.30 The Ghost of Number Ten. 12.55 Weather. 1.00 News. 1.15 Any Questions? 2.00 News: Any Answers? 0870 010 0444. 2.30 Novel Encounters with Aphra Behn. See *Pick of the Day*. 3.00 News: The Saturday Play: The House Swap. See *Pick of the Day*.

4.00 News: Weekend Woman's Hour. 5.00 Saturday PM. 5.30 Talking Pictures. 5.54 Shipping Forecast. 5.57 Weather. 6.00 Six O'Clock News. 6.35 Live from London. 7.00 News: Saturday Review. 7.45 Letter from Laramie. Fraser Hamilton writes an audio letter from his cowboy childhood in his back garden in 1940s Liverpool. Do big boys still need the Wild West? 8.00 News: The Archive Hour. Born Again in a New Condition. Author David Dabydeen uses diaries and letters to explore the relationship between black people and Britain from the 16th century to the Second World War. 9.00 News: The Classic Serial: Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands. By Jorge Amado, dramatised in three parts by Stuart Morris. 3: 'Second Coming'. In Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, the young widow Dona Flor has married the respectable, bassoon-playing pharmacist, Dr Teodoro. But she is not allowed to forget the dissolute Vadrinho, her first husband. With Lesley Carver, Tristan Sturrock and John Rowe. Director David Hunter. 10.00 News and Weather. 10.15 The Moral Maze. 11.00 News: Scaling the Mountain. Robert Dawson Scott invites a performer or composer to revisit a major musical challenge.

11.30 Parkes and Gardens. The Wild Side. Entrance to hell or Arcadian escape, our view of the Yorkshire Dales has changed through the ages, but our need for wild places has remained. Simon Parkes joins the people managing our landscapes. (R) 12.00 News. 12.25 Experimental Feature: Star Tales. (R) 12.30 The Late Story: My Son, the Bird. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00 As World Service. 1.30 World News. 1.55 Shipping Forecast. 1.58 Inshore Forecast. 5.50 - 6.00 Bells on Sunday.

RADIO 4 LW (98.1kHz LW)
12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines: Shipping Forecast. 12.05 LIVE (98.1kHz LW) 6.00 Dirty Talk. 6.30 Breakfast. 9.00 Chiles on Saturday. 11.00 Move It. 11.30 Sick as a Parrot. 12.00 Sportscafe. 12.00 Sport on 5. Rugby Union: the start of the Five Nations rugby championship, with Ireland v France at Lansdowne Road and Scotland v Wales at Murrayfield. Football: reports, goal news and commentary on a top game. FA Carling Premiership fixtures include Nottingham Forest v Man Utd, West Ham vs Arsenal, and Liverpool vs

Middlesbrough. 6.00 Sports Report. Classified football, rugby and racing, plus reports, interviews and comment. 6.30 The Late Six-O-Six. 8.00 Dailyn UK. Richard Dailyn with news from around the UK. 9.00 The Treatment. Stuart Macorie and guests review the week's news. 10.00 Late Night Currie. Edwina Currie with the weekend's big issues, including sport in depth at 10.30, and a news briefing at 11.00. Phone 0500 909893. 1.00 - 6.00 Up All Night. Richard Dailyn with news from Britain and around the world.

CLASSIC FM (100.0-101.9MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Lucas. 8.00 Countdown. 11.00 Masters of Their Art. 12.00 Mike Reid. 3.00 Margaret Howard. 6.00 Classic FM at the Movies. 7.00 Smooth Classics at Seven. 9.00 Opera Guide. 10.00 The Classic Quiz. 12.00 Midnight Music. 2.00 - 2.04 Evening Concert. 4.00 - 6.00 Sunday Start.

VERGIN RADIO (1215, 187-1200kHz MW)
10.50MHz FM. 9.00 Harriet Scott. 12.00 Classic Countdown with Russ Williams. 2.00 Rock and Roll Football. 5.30 Wheels of Steel. 10.00 Janey Lee Grace. 2.00 - 6.00 Steve Power.

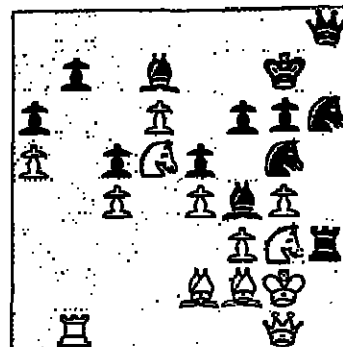
WORLD SERVICE RADIO (98.1kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Best on Record. 2.00 The World Today. 2.30 Agenda. 3.00 The World Today. 3.45 Sports Roundup. 3.50 World Business Review. 3.55 Letter from America. 4.00 The World Today. 4.30 Omnibus. 5.00 The World Today. 5.30 - 6.00 Women Who Dared to Speak.

TALK RADIO
6.00 OK to Talk. 8.00 Darryl Baker's Morning Edition. 12.00 It's Round and White - with Tom Watt. 2.00 The SportZone: Soccer Special. 5.05 505 with Gary Newbourn and Tom Watt. 7.30 Nancy Roberts. 10.00 Dave Barrett's Phone-In with the Midnight Psychic. 2.00 - 6.00 Mike Dickinson.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN



defends. White was just about to break through in the diagram when Fedorov got in first. If 39 fsg1 Rsg3+ 40 Bsg3 Qh3+ 41 Kf2 Bsg3+ 42 Qxg3 Nxe4+. The rest was slaughter.

White: Zurab Azmaiparashvili
White: Alexei Fedorov
Elista Olympiad 1998
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 Nf6 27 Kg2 Rsh1
2 c4 g6 28 Qsh1 Rhs
3 Nc3 Bg7 29 Qb1 Qe8
4 e4 d6 30 Ne3 Ng5
5 Nf3 0-0 31 hxc5 Rsg3+
6 Be2 e5 32 Be2 Qh5
7 Bc3 Ng4 33 Qg1 dxc5
8 Bg5 f6 34 Rb1 Bc6
9 Bh4 Ne5 35 Rd1 Ng8
10 d5 Ne7 36 d6 Bd7
11 Nd2 h5 37 Nd5 Nf6
12 h3 Nf6 38 Rb1 (see
13 g4 h4g4 39 Nxf4 exf4
14 h4g4 Nf7 40 fsg1 fsg3
15 Nf1 c5 41 Bsg3 Rsg3+
16 Ne3 Bd7 42 Kxg3 Qh3+
17 Bd3 Qa5 43 Kf2 Nxe4+
18 Ne2 a6 44 Ke1 Qc3+
19 a4 Nc8 45 Kf1 Nd2+
20 f3 Qb6 46 Kf2 Qd4+
21 a5 Bb6 47 Kg2 Qe5+
22 Bb2 Kg7 48 Kf2 Qf4+
23 Kf1 Rb8 49 Ke1 Nxb1
24 Ne2 Ne7 50 Qxcs Qg3+
25 Ng3 Qc7 26 b4 Bf4 0-1

BRIDGE

ALAN HIRON

HAVING GONE down, albeit unhelpfully, in his contract of Four Hearts on this deal, declarer asked his partner how he would have tackled the hand. "Differently!" was North's succinct reply. Can you see what he had in mind?

Playing five-card majors, South opened One Heart and North bid his hand to the limit by raising pre-emptively to game. South even considered going on but he passed and West led $\spadesuit K$ against Four Hearts. A cross-ruff was a possibility, but dummy's spades offered a tempting alternative and declarer, after discarding a club from dummy, won with $\spadesuit A$ and followed with the ace and another spade.

While West discarded a club, East won and forced dummy with another diamond lead, effectively shutting off the spade suit. Now, no matter what South tried, there was no way to avoid four losers. If he attempted to ruff his losing diamonds in dummy, West would come to $\heartsuit J$ and, equally, the long spades could no longer be brought in as West now held more trumps than dummy.

When pressed, dummy amplified his cryptic remark. His suggestion

Game all: dealer South

North
 $\spadesuit Q 9 8 7 4 3$
 $\heartsuit A 10 7 3$
 $\diamondsuit none$
 $\clubsuit Q 9 3$
West East
 $\spadesuit J 8 6 4$ $\heartsuit K 10 6$
 $\diamondsuit K Q 9 5 2$ $\clubsuit J 8 7 4$
 $\heartsuit A 7 5$ $\spadesuit K 10 8 6 4 2$
South
 $\heartsuit A 5 2$
 $\spadesuit A K 9 5 2$
 $\diamondsuit A 10 6 3$
 $\clubsuit J$

(which seems to work was to discard a spade, not a club, from the table at trick 1 and follow with a club lead. Now the defenders are helpless - even if West wins and switches to a trump, there are still 10 tricks on a cross-ruff. Was there a case, I wonder, for the seemingly suicidal opening lead of a trump from the West hand? - a brief analysis suggests that this, followed by careful defence, leads to the defeat of the contract whatever declarer tries.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

SCI-FI COMEDIES have not always been successful - as anyone who has seen *Morons From Outer Space* will tell you. However, *Men in Black* (3pm Sky Premier), proved a big hit with its comic treatment of the idea of American agents policing the aliens they allow to come to Earth. Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones (right), who utters the immortal deadpan line "we at the FBI do not have a sense of humour that we are aware

of", have tremendous fun as the agents who live by the motto "protecting the Earth from the scum of the universe". Norman Hunter, whose heyday was in the 1970s, had one of the best ever football nicknames: "Bites Your Legs". The hardman defender, who enjoyed great success with Leeds United and England, is profiled in Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (5.30pm Sky Sports 1).



(990780). 12.00 A Century of Warfare (355842). 1.00 Weapons of War (770864). 2.00 Close.

SKY ONE

7.00 Bump in the Night (10255). 7.30 Street Sharks (22078). 8.00 Adventures of Sinbad (87709). 9.00 The Simpsons (93032). 9.30 Garfield and Friends (27964). 10.00 The Best of the Chris Evans Show (28254). 11.00 World Wrestling Federation Live Wire (93780). 12.00 World Wrestling Federation Shotgun (40518). 1.00 The New Adventures of Superman (28235). 2.00 America's Dumbest Criminals (4508). 2.30 America's Dumbest Criminals (7916). 3.00 Gullity (82335). 4.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (4070). 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager (7688). 6.00 Xena: Warrior Princess (8009). 7.00 VP (63544). 8.00 JAG (89664). 9.00 Film: Sky One Special Feature: Damien - Omen II (1978). (6205). 11.00 Best Beat the Crusher (29963). 12.00 Showbiz Week (65739). 12.30 The Big Easy (8705). 1.30 Fire (7281). 2.30 - 6.00 Long Play (66828).

SKY SPORTS 1

6.00 Hold the Back Page (80790). 7.00 European Tour Golf (7457). 9.00 Hold the Back Page (8457). 10.00 Racing News (30525). 10.30 International Cricket South Africa vs West Indies (78254). 12.00 Celtic Soccer Saturday (543708). 5.30 Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook (86438). See *Pick of the Day*. 7.00 Bundesliga Basketball (85708). 9.00 Set-

urday Fight Night (88821). 11.00 Max Power (54653). 12.00 Spanish Football (9323). 2.00 Saturday Night (4205). 4.00 - 6.00 Bundesliga Basketball (86438).

SKY SPORTS 2

6.00 Sky Sports Centre (214907). 7.00 Aerobics - Oz Style (3348803). 7.30 Racing News (305148). 12.30 EastEnders (7806438). 3.00 The Bill (8807389). 5.25 Butterflies (78237). 6.05 Films: That Rivalry Touch (1988). (8574078). 6.40 What a Carry On! (1968). (8574078). 6.55 Only Fools and Horses (5354631). 9.45 The Thin Blue Line (8775438). 9.55 One Foot in the Grave (294032). 10.35 Monty Python's Flying Circus (225727). 11.15 Live at Jangle (783883). 11.50 The Man from Aurale (352844). 12.30 French and Saunders (1988). 1.00 Films: Island of Terror (1988). (4548007). 3.00 - 7.00 Shopping with Screenplay (552738).

LIVING

6.00 Tiny and Crew (5700785). 6.20 Johnson and Friends (891488). 6.30 Philbert the Frog (2036273). 6.40 Tiny Tales (8442728). 6.55 Greedy Susan and the Gang (8444078). 6.55 Polka Dot Shorts (8442264). 7.00 Practical Parenting (891984). 7.05 10 plus 2. (591267). 7.20 Bedtime Stories (507728). 7.25 Babaloo (900099). 7.30 Calou. (110728). 7.35 Bug Alert (798767). 7.55 Practical Parenting (405783). 8.00 Polka

UK GOLD

7.00 Angels (9883490). 7.30 Neighbours (7438708). 8.25 Dallas (803148). 12.30 EastEnders (7806438). 3.00 The Bill (8807389). 5.25 Butterflies (78237). 6.05 Films: That Rivalry Touch (1988). (8574078). 6.40 What a Carry On! (1968). (8574078). 6.55 Only Fools and Horses (5354631). 9.45 The Thin Blue Line (8775438). 9.55 One Foot in the Grave (294032). 10.35 Monty Python's Flying Circus (225727). 11.15 Live at Jangle (783883). 11.50 The Man from Aurale (352844). 12.30 French and Saunders (1988). 1.00 Films: Island of Terror (1988). (4548007). 3.00 - 7.00 Shopping with Screenplay (552738).

LIVING

6.00 Tiny and Crew (5700785). 6.20 Johnson and Friends (891488). 6.30 Philbert the Frog (2036273). 6.40 Tiny Tales (8442728). 6.55 Greedy Susan and the Gang (8444078). 6.55 Polka Dot Shorts (8442264). 7.00 Practical Parenting (891984). 7.05 10 plus 2. (591267). 7.20 Bedtime Stories (507728). 7.25 Babaloo (900099). 7.30 Calou. (110728). 7.35 Bug Alert (798767). 7.55 Practical Parenting (405783). 8.00 Polka

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

BBC1 N IRELAND

As BBC1 England except: 5.50 Northern Ireland Results (31341). 6.30 News: Weather (64586).

BBC1 SCOTLAND

As BBC1 England except: 6.20 Reporting Scotland (50233). 10.25 Sportsweek - Match of the Day (76564).

BBC1 WALES

As BBC1 England except: 6.20 Wales Today (50233).

NGLIA

As LWT except: 12.30 Pirate TV (5148). 1.05 Angle News and Weather (5795832). 1.45 Champions of the Future (62506). 2.45 Airwell (905983). 4.00 The Black Swan (8124235). 5.05 Angle News and Sport (891322). 10.55 Film: Wyatt Earp. Dodge City lawman Wyatt Earp was a dangerous company and even Costner plays him as an inflexible, ruthless aggressor. The film is the dark side of an ordinary Western myth, told in the jolting manner of a mini-series. There are exceptional sequences but it lacks the pie-gravity of *Unforgotten* and the sheer pace of *Tomb Raider*. With Dennis Quaid. 3.75 (8583). 2.15 The Jerry Springer Show (7010649). 2.55 Box Office America

(554823). 3.20 World Football (8044320). 3.50 CD UK (4089303). 4.45 Soundtrack (8387823). 5.05 ITV Nightscreen (790397).

CENTRAL

As LWT except: 12.30 Premier (8148). 1.05 Central News and Weather (5795832). 1.40 On the Beat (4534393). 2.40 The Secret KGB JFK Assassination Files (828987). 3.00 Film: Murder by the Book. Week-mannered mystery writer's alter ego helps him solve a murder case involving a damsel in distress and a fake antiquarian. Fanciful crime caper remained unrelaxed for over a year. With Robert Hoyte, Catherine Mary Stewart. (814868). 5.05 Central News, Weather and Goals Extra (891322). 4.00 Joffrey (20265). 5.00 Spotlight Asia (22857).

WYATT EARP

As LWT except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (8148). 1.05 HTV News (5795832). 1.45 Prime TV (825085). 2.45 Prime TV (825085). 3.05 Team Knight Rider (825085). 5.05 HTV News and Sport (891322). 10.55 Film: Wyatt Earp (8795832). 2.15 The Jerry Springer Show (7010649). 2.55 Box

Office America (554823). 3.20 World Football (8044320). 3.50 CD UK (4089303). 4.45 Soundtrack (8387823). 5.05 ITV Nightscreen (790397).

HTV WEST

As HTV Wales except: 12.30 Sportsweek (8148). 1.05 News: Weather (5795832). 1.45 Movies, Games and Videos (82508). 2.45 Prime TV (825085). 3.00 Dinosaur (408987). 5.05 HTV West News and Sport (891322). 4.00 News Headlines: National Weather (87902). MERIDIAN As LWT except: 12.30 Dinosaur (8148). 1.05 Meridian News and Weather (5795832). 1.45 Champions of the Future (62506). 2.45 Prime TV (825085). 3.00 Dinosaur (408987). 5.05 HTV West News and Sport (891322). 10.55 Film: Wyatt Earp (8795832). 2.15 The Jerry Springer Show (7010649). 2.55 Box Office America (554823). 3.20

World Football (8044320). 3.50 CD UK (4089303). 4.45 Soundtrack (8387823). 5.05 ITV Nightscreen (790397).

WESTCOUNTRY

As LWT except: 12.30 Movies, Games and Videos (8148). 1.05 News: Weather (5795832). 1.45 The Making of a Bug's Life (2507273). 2.40 Film: Man about the House. TV sitcom spin-off, more freebie than most. With Richard O'Sullivan, Paula Wilton, Yvonne Joyce. (77038). 3.30 Quest DSV (78292). 5.05 Westcountry News (891322). 10.55 Film: Wyatt Earp (8795832). 2.15 The Jerry Springer Show (7010649). 2.55 Box Office America (554823). 3.20 World Football (8044320). 3.50 CD UK (4089303). 4.45 Soundtrack (8387823). 5.05 ITV Nightscreen (790397).

YORKSHIRE

As LWT except: 12.30 Dinosaur (8148). 1.05 Calendar News Headlines (5795832). 1.45 Calendar News (5795832). 2.40 Goals Extra (2644088).

TYNE TEES

As Yorkshire except: 1.05 North East News and Weather (7985832). 5.05 North East News and Weather (507877). 5.10 Full Time (2644088).

S4C

As Channel 4 except: 1.05 Film: Nurse on Wheels. Juliet Mills cycles round the village dispensing good cheer in sickly comedy. With Ronald Lewis, Simon Sims, Ray Winstone. 4.05 Soyler. (77225). 2.40 Channel 4 Racing from Sandown Park (4047588). 3.45 Ryght: Pencampwrfaeth y Pum Gwlad 1999 (7260070). 6.40 Y Gloc (6421248). 7.45 Newyddion 4. (110728). 8.00 News: Wales. 8.05 News: Wales. 8.10 News: Wales. 8.15 News: Wales. 8.20 News: Wales. 8.25 News: Wales. 8.30 News: Wales. 8.35 News: Wales. 8.40 News: Wales. 8.45 News: Wales. 8.50 News: Wales. 8.55 News: Wales. 9.00 News: Wales. 9.05 News: Wales. 9.10 News: Wales. 9.15 News: Wales. 9.20 News: Wales. 9.25 News: Wales. 9.30 News: Wales. 9.35 News: Wales. 9.40 News: Wales. 9.45 News: Wales. 9.50 News: Wales. 9.55 News: Wales. 10.00 News: Wales. 10.05 News: Wales. 10.10 News: Wales. 10.15 News: Wales. 10.20 News: Wales. 10.25 News: Wales. 10.30 News: Wales. 10.35 News: Wales. 10.40 News: Wales. 10.45 News: Wales. 10.50 News: Wales. 10.55 News: Wales. 11.00 News: Wales. 11.05 News: Wales. 11.10 News: Wales. 11.15 News: Wales. 11.20 News: Wales. 11.25 News: Wales. 11.30 News: Wales. 11.35 News: Wales. 11.40 News: Wales. 11.45 News: Wales. 11.50 News: Wales. 11.55 News: Wales. 12.00 News: Wales. 12.05 News: Wales. 12.10 News: Wales. 12.15 News: Wales. 12.20 News: Wales. 12.25 News: Wales. 12.30 News: Wales. 12.35 News: Wales. 12.40 News: Wales. 12.45 News: Wales. 12.50 News: Wales. 12.55 News: Wales. 13.00 News: Wales. 13.05 News: Wales. 13.10 News: Wales. 13.15 News: Wales. 13.20 News: Wales. 13.25 News: Wales. 13.30 News: Wales. 13.35 News: Wales. 13.40 News: Wales. 13.45 News: Wales. 13.50 News: Wales. 13.55 News: Wales. 14.00 News: Wales. 14.05 News: Wales. 14.10 News: Wales. 14.15 News: Wales. 14.20 News: Wales. 14.25 News: Wales. 14.30 News: Wales. 14.35 News: Wales. 14.40 News: Wales. 14.45 News: Wales. 14.50 News: Wales. 14.55 News: Wales. 15.00 News: Wales. 15.05 News: Wales. 15.10 News: Wales. 15.15 News: Wales. 15.20 News: Wales. 15.25 News: Wales. 15.30 News: Wales. 15.35 News: Wales. 15.40 News: Wales. 15.45 News: Wales. 15.50 News: Wales. 15.55 News: Wales. 16.00 News: Wales. 16.05 News: Wales. 16.10 News: Wales. 16.15 News: Wales. 16.20 News: Wales. 16.25 News: Wales. 16.30 News: Wales. 16.35 News: Wales. 16.40 News: Wales. 16.45 News: Wales. 16.50 News: Wales. 16.55 News: Wales. 17.00 News: Wales. 17.05 News: Wales. 17.10 News: Wales. 17.15 News: Wales. 17.20 News: Wales. 17.25 News: Wales. 17.30 News: Wales. 17.35 News: Wales. 17.40 News: Wales. 17.45 News: Wales. 17.50 News: Wales. 17.55 News: Wales. 18.00 News: Wales. 18.05 News: Wales. 18.10 News: Wales. 18.15 News: Wales. 18.20 News: Wales. 18.25 News: Wales. 18.30 News: Wales. 18.35 News: Wales. 18.40 News: Wales. 18.45 News: Wales. 18.50 News: Wales. 18.55 News: Wales. 19.00 News: Wales. 19.05 News: Wales. 19.10 News: Wales. 19.15 News: Wales. 19.20 News: Wales. 19.25 News: Wales. 19.30 News: Wales. 19.35 News: Wales. 19.40 News: Wales. 19.45 News: Wales. 19.50 News: Wales. 19.55 News: Wales. 20.00 News: Wales. 20.05 News: Wales. 20.10 News: Wales. 20.15 News: Wales. 20.20 News: Wales. 20.25 News: Wales. 20.30 News: Wales. 20.35 News: Wales. 20.40 News: Wales. 20.45 News: Wales. 20.50 News: Wales. 20.55 News: Wales. 21.00 News: Wales. 21.05 News: Wales. 21.10 News: Wales. 21.15 News: Wales. 21.20 News: Wales. 21.25 News: Wales. 21.30 News: Wales. 21.35 News: Wales. 21.40 News: Wales. 21.45 News: Wales. 21.50 News: Wales. 21.55 News: Wales. 22.00 News: Wales. 22.05 News: Wales. 22.10 News: Wales. 22.15 News: Wales. 22.20 News: Wales. 22.25 News: Wales. 22.30 News: Wales. 22.35 News: Wales. 22.40 News: Wales. 22.45 News: Wales. 22.50 News: Wales. 22.55 News: Wales. 23.00 News: Wales. 23.05 News: Wales. 23.10 News: Wales. 23.15 News: Wales. 23.20 News: Wales. 23.25 News: Wales. 23.30 News: Wales. 23.35 News: Wales. 23.40 News: Wales. 23.45 News: Wales. 23.50 News: Wales. 23.55 News: Wales. 24.00 News: Wales. 24.05 News: Wales. 24.10 News: Wales. 24.15 News: Wales. 24.20 News: Wales. 24.25 News: Wales. 24.30 News: Wales. 24.35 News: Wales. 24.40 News: Wales. 24.45 News: Wales. 24.50 News: Wales. 24.55 News: Wales. 25.00 News: Wales. 25.05 News: Wales. 25.10 News: Wales. 25.15 News: Wales. 25.20 News: Wales. 25.25 News: Wales. 25.30 News: Wales. 25.35 News: Wales. 25.40 News: Wales. 25.45 News: Wales. 25.50 News: Wales. 25.55 News: Wales. 26.00 News: Wales. 26.05 News: Wales. 26.10 News: Wales. 26.15 News: Wales. 26.20 News: Wales. 26.25 News: Wales. 26.30 News: Wales. 26.35 News: Wales. 26.40 News: Wales. 26.45 News: Wales. 26.50 News: Wales. 26.55 News: Wales. 27.00 News: Wales. 27.05 News: Wales. 27.10 News: Wales. 27.15 News: Wales. 27.

YOUR MONEY

HOW TO MAKE IT • HOW TO SPEND IT



Eye to eye: why it's cool to wear glasses

SHOPPING, PAGE 10



Can this car really revive Rover?

MOTORING, PAGE 12



Rotters in the loyal family

There are a lot of loyalty cards out there. But which offer the best value for you? By Paul Slade

Loyalty has become a much-abused concept in the financial world. Usually all it means nowadays is that you take out a firm's credit card and stay loyal to it. Meanwhile, it screws you into the ground with excessively high charges. But every now and then a little flower blooms among the weeds and a credit card crops up which offers a marginally better deal to long-suffering cardholders.

Two providers have recently entered the fray, offering cards which give the cardholder money or other benefits back for every £1 that he or she spends.

One of the new issuers, Bradford & Bingley, offers the best reward scheme of any nationally available plastic card, according to new research that has been carried out by Staffordshire University.

The survey looked at the cash value of loyalty points given by rival card suppliers. Bradford & Bingley topped the table with an award of £4 for every £100 spent. The stingiest card of the 20 rated is TSB's Trustcard, which gives its users as little as 20p for every £100 they spend.

Professor Steve Worthington conducted the survey on behalf of Vauxhall, whose own GM Card came second. Professor Worthington points out that the TSB card has been in issue since 1978 and says it is now "showing its age".

He suggests that people who clear their card balance in full every month – and therefore pay no interest – should pick the card with the best loyalty scheme. For all other users, it is the interest rate charged on uncleared debts – the APR – which is most important.

"If you can afford to be a full payer, then the usage incentives are an extra bonus," Professor Worthington says. "But if you're taking revolving credit, then I think you should concentrate on the APR."

These annualised percentage rates show the rate of interest you would be paying if you borrowed a given sum on your card for a full year. These rates are supposed to make it easier to shop around and compare different card suppliers. However, contrasting one APR with another is actually far from a straightforward exercise.

Barclaycard, for example, has a tiered APR structure which charges you more interest the less you spend and which may vary from one month to the next. If you were to borrow £299



The best card for you will depend on your individual spending patterns

WHY IT SOMETIMES PAYS TO BE LOYAL - THE TOP CARDS

Name of card, date issued, cardholder age	Payment type, where accepted, UK outlets	Annual fee	Real rate of return on money spent, %	Actual monetary value for £3,000 spent	Example of reward based on £3,000 spent	Actual monetary value for £10,000 spent
Bradford & Bingley 1998 N/A	Credit Visa/MasterCard 580,000 outlets	None	4%	£120	£120 cash back on completion of a new mortgage	£400
GM Card 1994 600,000	Credit Visa/MasterCard 580,000 outlets	None	3%	£90	£90 off a year's Vauxhall	£300
British Airways Direct Club 1998, N/A	Charge Card 180,000 outlets	£75	2.27%-2.64%	£68*	Two adults and two children into Alton Towers	£264*
Fortis Card 1998 N/A	Credit MasterCard 580,000 outlets	£12	1.65%-2.5%	£75	One night's accommodation in Posthouse, Leeds	£165
Tesco Clubcard Plus 1998 250,000	Debit 1500 stores, petrol stations 640 outlets	None	2%	£60	£60 off Tesco shopping	£200

*Example based on typical cardholder spend. BA 25% only. 75% *Earning scheme to be replaced by May 1999

in February, for example, you would pay interest at an APR of 21.4 per cent. But up your spending to £500 in March and your APR falls to just 17.4 per cent. It is the amount you spend each month that counts here, not the size of your accumulated balance.

Janice Allen, of the National Consumer Council, warns that using cards with a loyalty scheme can lead to a flood of extra junk mail. She says: "Loyalty cards are more valuable to the issuer than to the consumer. They're giving vital information about your spending patterns to the retailer or the bank, which will allow them to target you with other offers."

Another trick to look out for is the introductory offer. Anyone opting for a new Birmingham Midshires Visa card would pay interest at a comparatively modest APR of just 10.9 per cent for the first six months. But as soon as that six months is up, cardholders are in for a shock as the APR then all but doubles overnight to 19.9 per cent.

Professor Worthington says: "After a certain time period, the teaser rate vanishes, and you're back up to the full rate of APR. It makes comparisons of APRs even more difficult because nearly everyone has got a teaser rate these days."

The Vauxhall survey also looks at non-payment cards. These are the cards which, rather than paying for your shopping, simply record electronically the loyalty points you have earned. Professor Worthington found the best card at Boots – which gives you £4 for every £100 spent – and the worst at Tesco, where your non-payment Clubcard earns you just £1 per £100 spent.

But using payment and non-payment cards together lets card users pull one trick of their own, thanks to a process called double dipping. Professor Worthington explains: "What many sharp people do is use one of each type of card, and therefore get two lots of points at one time. For example, if you were in a Shell garage you could use your non-payment Shell loyalty card, but pay with, say, a Goldfish card. You would get two lots of points on one transaction."

Worthington's research shows that the Shell card earns you points worth up to £1.30 per £100 spent, while the Goldfish card nets you another £1 per £100 spent. A bill of £100, double-dipped in the way Professor Worthington suggests, could therefore earn you total points worth as much as £2.30.

BARGAIN HUNTER



Property of the week

Weekend retreat

SIX MILES from the Suffolk coast and four miles from the railway station at Wickham Market, this two-bedroom traditional brick-built cottage in Station Road, Blaxhall, would make the perfect weekend retreat. If it weren't for a few structural problems, it would cost a lot more than £74,000. Overlooking fields, it has two double bedrooms, large kitchen, downstairs bathroom and living room with stairs to the first floor. It sits on a generous plot of 80ft by 100ft, with garden and fruit trees. Details from Clarke & Simpson (01728 724200).

ROSALIND RUSSELL

Car of the week

Negotiate to accumulate

REPORTS THAT BMW dealers have more Z3s than they know what to do with seem to have been exaggerated. Fijl and Orinoco special edition Z3s have been flooding the showrooms, with their special paint jobs, air conditioning, electric convertible roofs, leather trim, heated seats and alloy wheels. But, according to BMW dealers, their stock will be quickly sold – they can sell 1.9 roadsters all day long, because it is a cheap BMW. More open to negotiation are the Z3 2.8 versions. Approach an independent like Robert Hughes Management Group (01753 621221), with half a dozen on offer at £20,995, a saving on the £24,000 list price.

JAMES RUPPERT

Deal of the week

Going down – again

GO TO the kitchen and put the kettle on. By the time you come back the blighters have dropped the cost of a mortgage even further. When will it all end? Not this week, judging by FirstMortgage's latest offer. The company has launched its cheapest-ever three-year loan, at 3.99 per cent until 31 March 2002. The mortgage is available on a loan-to-value of up to 90 per cent, with no compulsory insurance. Any catches? There is a £395 application fee. But this really is a low-cost loan. One worth going for – until next week.

NIC CICUTTI

DSS computer fails to cope with pension pay-outs

Pensioners are losing out – thanks to a bug in the DSS system. By Teresa Hunter

HOW MUCH is your pension worth? You don't know? Neither does the DSS, the agency which is responsible for paying retirement income to millions of people every week.

Problems at the central DSS computer has resulted in hundreds of thousands of the newly retired not receiving the pensions due to them. The chaos, with its overtone of creaking Orwellian inefficiency, has thrown a spotlight on just how powerful this single piece of technology is, and how it influences so many people's lives.

What have been described as "teething problems" with a new £100m computer has resulted in chaos, leaving one in three pensioners who retired since last April being short-changed on their entitlements.

Although in theory the basic state pension could be hit, because almost everyone retiring from full-time employment receives the full state pension nowadays, the system has mainly coped with this sum.

However, its technical wizardry completely floundered when the time came to calculate the additional State Earnings Related Pension top-up (Serps), which many people have been contributing towards

throughout their working lives. Some people have been short-changed by many pounds a week for nearly a year, and it will take more time still to resolve the problem.

Many widows have failed to receive their due widows' pensions, and anyone involved in a divorce will also have found their pensions affairs in a muddle. But it is not only the retired who have been hit.

National Insurance rebates into private pensions have all but collapsed, which means that these investments missed out on last year's strong stock market performance.

But most worrying of all is the difficulty in establishing whether you have received the

correct pensions and other benefits due, or whether you are among those losing out.

Independent actuary Bryn Davis said: "The calculations involved in working out your pension rights are not very difficult. The big problem is getting hold of the records."

"The DSS computer is the only agency holding records about your earnings and National Insurance contributions going back over the years. We are all utterly dependent on it. And it doesn't work."

In a less-than-magnanimous gesture, Alistair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, announced this week that everyone affected will be compensated by a one-off payment of £10.

The computer problems suffered by so many undermine the wisdom of keeping and filing old pay-slips, particularly F60s which record your pay tax and National Insurance in any given year. Only with this evidence can you challenge the Department of Social Security over how much they pay you in retirement by way of Serps.

However, if you have saved these documents and you can use a calculator, you can work out the sums – although this can be both confusing and complicated. It is probably more practical to contact your local DSS office and ask staff there to explain how they have reached the calculation they are paying you – supplying them

with the information you have.

Similarly, anyone who has expected Serps rebates to be paid into their private plan should contact their pension provider and ask them for a statement – except your insurer will be unable to tell you whether the DSS rebates have been made correctly.

The biggest problem with Serps rebates centres on age-related rebates which were made for the first time for the year 1997-1998, and should have been paid into your pension during the 1998/1999 tax year.

The computer couldn't handle the calculation and these payments have not been made. In this case, the Government is promising to pay 0.5 per cent for each month of delay, amounting to 6 per cent over a year. But many people saving towards their pensions will find this inadequate given that, despite the uncertainties of the past year, the FTSE 100 share index rose by 18 per cent last year.

A spokesman for Scottish Mutual said: "The first part of call has to be your pension provider, but he won't be able to tell you for sure whether an adequate rebate has been paid, because we don't know how much you earned."

FILE AS YOU EARN

How to stay one step ahead of the state:

- Always keep all records relating to pay and National Insurance contributions – one day you may find that you need them.

- Ask the DSS to explain

how your pension benefit has been calculated.

- If you are unhappy, consider paying an independent actuary to check the DSS's sums. He may only levy a small fee, but it will be worth it to get your pension right.

- Ask your pension provider for a statement detailing exactly what has been paid into your plan in the past year.

- Ask your wages office to calculate what the rebate should have been. They can easily do the sum.

INSIDE

Financial makeover
Jonathan Davis

Shopping
Motoring

10-11
12

Property
Hot spot: Kennington

13
14

0800 210 222

Lines are open 24 hours, 7 days a week. No salesperson will call. For your protection all telephone calls may be recorded.

M&G

NAME: PETER LORD AGE: 48 OCCUPATION: SELF-EMPLOYED COMPUTER CONSULTANT



The Treasury's new tax-free pension wrapper is a sensible move, but hardly new

Unit and investment trust firms have always offered their products in pension form. However, independent advisers have tended not to recommend them, largely because of the low upfront commission they paid. Many companies have also offered "recurring single premium contributions", where you can pay regular monthly premiums - but without heavy charges. Again, most advisers "forget" to tell their clients about this option, for the same reason as before.

Will this change now that unit and investment trusts can be marketed more

While useful, these proposals don't constitute a revolution. We're still waiting for New Labour to deliver on that one and I, for one, am not holding my breath.

The adviser
Bryan Bull is an associate director with the Aitchison and Colegrave Group, independent financial advisers, Suite One, Berkeley House, 15 Hay Hill, Mayfair, London W1X 7LG (0171-499 0990).

The advice
Peter opened a regular contribution personal pension contract in 1984 with Sun Alliance, now Royal and Sun Alliance, investing in the traditional with-profits fund. In 1987 he invested a single contribution of £2,000. These contracts are the old-style "retirement annuity contracts" and have a guaranteed fund value at normal retirement age of 65 and also a guaranteed annuity rate.

Peter has indicated that he would be prepared to invest a proportion of his capital into asset-backed investments adopting a balanced attitude to risk. He is also interested in an exposure to Europe.

A black and white photograph of a man standing on a paved path in a park. He is wearing a light-colored sweater and dark pants. The background shows trees and a fence.

Peter Lord wants to make sure he retires in the lifestyle he is accustomed to

£3,000 in the European fund.

The Jupiter fund invests in a wide range of UK equities and since its launch in 1987 has achieved consistent first-quartile ranking, which means that it has always been

within the top quarter of funds in its sector. The European fund invests in a wide range of equities from the European community, and has also managed to achieve consistent first-quartile ranking.

As personal equity plans will be replaced by Individual Savings Plans (ISAs) on 6 April 1999, Peter should consider a further investment of up to £7,000 in three months' time, to achieve greater diversification.

Category	Value
BUILDING SOCIETY	£51.574
INVESTMENT TRUST AVERAGE	£45.547
MARKET INDEX	£35.547

The Plan allows you to save with regular monthly contributions or, if you prefer, with the occasional lump sum. What's more, you'll find our charges are amongst the lowest.

Foreign & Colonial

The value of shares and the income from them can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance is no guide to the future. All figures sourced Standard & Poor's Microcap 300. 78.30.98. Investment trust figures based on mid-market prices, net income reinvested, incl. historical 3.5% national expenses. (Actual Plan charges 0.2% commission and 0.5% Govt. Stamp Duty). Building society figure based on rate available (UK Savings £25,000+ Accounts) total return, net income reinvested. A building society account is not exposed to investment risks of fluctuating capital values. Foreign & Colonial Investment Limited (regulated by FIMCO and the Personal Investment Authority) or its subsidiaries are newsgivers of the investors' trusts.

www.fordcc.com

10%*
gross yield,
go with Govett.

சென்னை: 2016-17-ல், INDB-2

astute investors go with



Govent Enhanced Income Investment Trust PLC ("Govent Enhanced") will be a new investment trust issuing Ordinary Shares ("Ordinaries"), whose expected initial gross dividend yield will be 10% per annum. This figure is an expected yield based on assumptions set out in the prospectus and is not a forecast of profits.

If it includes the tax credit on dividends paid by Govent Enhanced Income which is assumed, as from April 6 1998, to be at the rate of 1/9 of the net dividend UK residents who are not liable to UK tax on dividends will not generally be entitled to reclaim tax credits unless they hold their Ordinaries through a PEP or ISA with the result that they will be entitled to recover the tax credit on dividends paid down to 5 April 2004.

The Ordinances will be geared on Zero Dividend Preference Shares ("Zeros") with a gross redemption yield of 7.75% per annum (issued by a subsidiary in equal amounts with the Ordinances) and on bank finance (provided by Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c., the parent company of the Manager) in an amount equal to 20 per cent of the initial gross assets of Govett Enriched Income and its subsidiary (including such bank finance and before formation, and issue expenses). The Zeros and the bank finance will have a five year maturity. The repayment at maturity of the Zeros and the bank finance will rank in priority to the Ordinances. A proportion of the management charge (including VAT) and the bank finance costs will be to be charged to capital account, which means that, whereas income may be higher, capital growth may be lower.

Please send me a mini-prospectus on Govett Enhanced Income Investment Trust.

Post to: Customer Services Department, All Govett, Shackleton House, 4 Battle Bridge Lane, London SE1 2HR

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Surname Initial

Address

Postcode _____ Tel (incl. STD) _____

Information you provide may be used to inform you of other products and services available from 3M. If you do not wish to receive such information please tick here ☐ **NO**

We may telephone you about this advertisement or in connection with other 3M products; if you would prefer not to be telephoned, please tick here ☐ **NO**

[illegible]

Always count the costs

Don't just look at returns on your investment, check the costs, too – you could be shocked



JONATHAN DAVIS

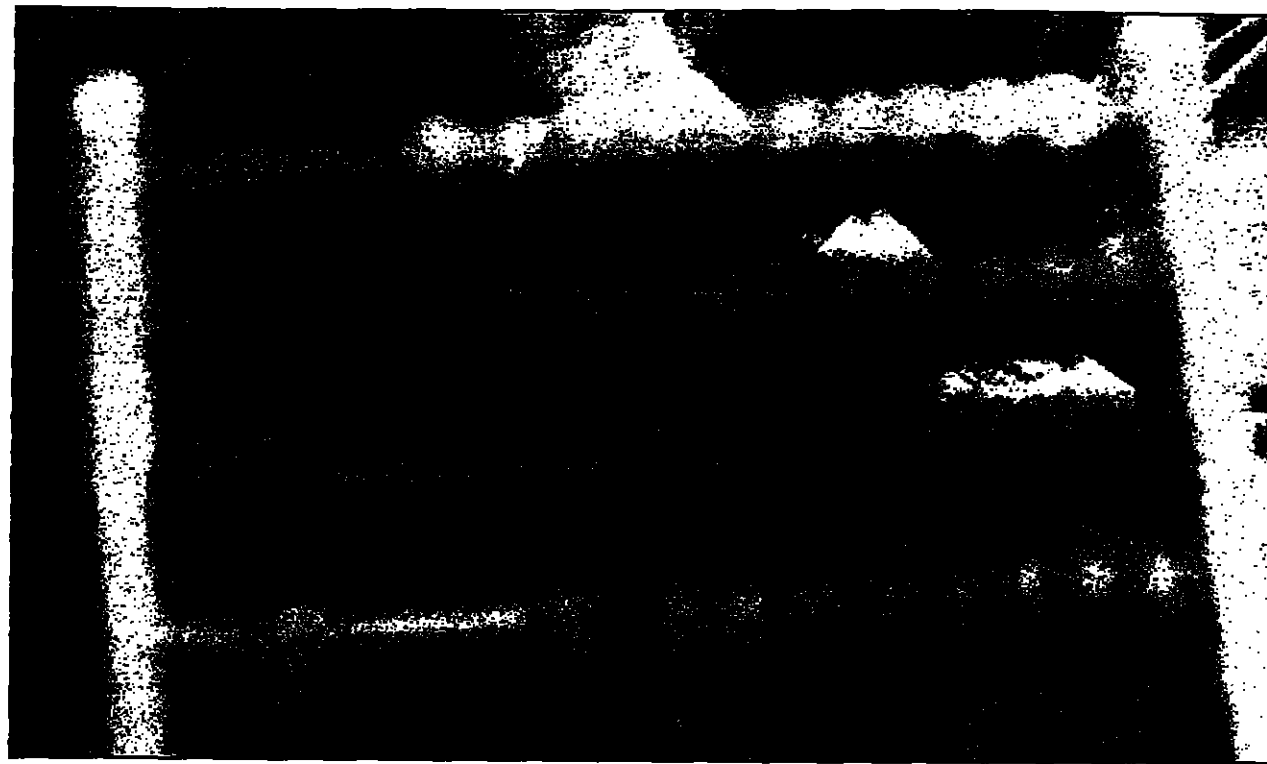
The longer you hold your fund, the bigger impact costs can make

Like many investors, it has taken me longer than it should have done to arrive at the realisation that costs are such a major ingredient of long-term investment performance.

Particularly with shares, it is easy to spend too much time looking at the return side of the equation and not enough at the cost element. Whether you are investing directly yourself or through a fund, the message is the same. Costs can seriously damage your wealth.

Of course in a bull market, like the one we have enjoyed for many years now, many investors have been able to ignore costs because the overall performance of their investments has been so good. If you are making 15 per cent a year tax-free through a PEP why bother whether you are paying 1 per cent, 2 per cent or 3 per cent to the company which is looking after your money? Many fund managers have grown fat on the back of their investors' seeming indifference to costs.

Now that inflation and interest rates have fallen so sharply, however, nominal returns from all types of investment must come down too. With inflation at, say, 2 per cent, and a long term real return on equities of around 6-7 per cent, even if you are still a long term bull of the equity mar-



Careful calculations are needed to work out the best deals

ket, only the foolish will count on shares producing long term returns much above 9 per cent in nominal terms.

With that kind of return, it obviously starts to make a lot more difference whether the cost of your equity unit trust, for example, is 1 per cent or 3 per cent per annum. There is no point in giving back a third of your potential annual return unless you are absolutely convinced that your fund manager can make up the difference in superior performance. In practice, a 3 per cent a year cost burden is an awful handicap for even a brilliant equity fund manager to make up – and 2 per cent a year is almost as stiff a hurdle to overcome.

But how do you find out what the cost of your managed funds are? The answer is: you can't. Fund managers will happily tell you what their annual management fee for running the fund is. But that figure is not the end of the story. There are a whole range of other costs

items (such as audit, custody, and administration costs) which the fund management company will deduct from any money you invest with them.

These costs can be highly significant, and can add anything from 10 per cent to 50 per cent to the annual cost of your fund. In the United States, total expense ratios (or TERs) for mutual funds are widely collected and published. But in this country, the amazing thing is that, although the unit trust business is now more than 60 years old, as far as is known nobody has ever thought it worthwhile to collect and analyse total expense ratios.

Now, at last, someone is trying to provide commercially what you would have thought would already be an essential service to investors. A consultancy firm called Fitzrovia International, which has been compiling TERs for offshore funds for the last five years, has recently published the first edition of what it hopes will be reg-

THE COST OF LOOKING AFTER YOUR MONEY

	Length of investment (years)				
	5	10	15	20	25
Total invested £	30,000	60,000	90,000	120,000	150,000
Accumulated Value of Fund, £	38,121	94,371	177,356	299,770	480,333
Value 'At Risk' through higher fees, £	1,271	6,002	16,969	38,723	18,603
As % of Fund Value	3.34	6.36	9.57	12.92	16.36
As % of Amount Invested	4.24	10.00	18.85	32.27	52.4

Source: Independent/Fitzrovia International Limited

ular quarterly surveys of TERs for UK-based funds. While the study is aimed at professionals, and priced above the average investor, the firm hopes to publish a retail version in due course, which will be welcome.

Having seen the first report in the series, I can say that it makes very interesting reading. Some of the findings are as you would expect: index funds are generally cheaper than actively managed funds (by nearly 0.5 per cent per annum on average). Funds that invest over-

number of well-known fund managers are routinely charging their clients more than twice the average fees of their competitors.

This disparity may be only a reflection of a fund manager's exceptional record or marketing skill. There is no law which says that the most successful fund managers (such as Jupiter and Perpetual) should not be allowed to profit from their skill in having compiled a good track record.

But, as usual in these cases, it is the many indifferent fund managers in the middle of the pack who seem to be getting away with more than they should if the market were genuinely competitive, and consumers more aware of the costs they are paying. Banks and insurance companies generally come out worse than specialist fund managers.

The key message is that the longer you intend to hold your fund, the bigger an impact costs make to its performance. The table below, for example, shows the difference it can make if you put £5,000 a year into a UK tax-free equity fund with a low TER (0.85 per cent) compared to one with one of the highest (2 per cent plus). Assume a 9 per cent growth rate (see above), run the numbers and what you find is really quite frightening.

Over 10 years, the burden of these additional costs will cut the value of your fund by £5,000, assuming identical performance in all other respects.

That equates to 6 per cent of your fund and 10 per cent of the total amount you have invested at that point. Over 25 years, the amount you will have "lost" through higher charges is £65,000 – the burden of extra costs has eaten up £1 of every £5 your fund by then should be worth, and over half your total investment has gone in paying these costs!

If the high-cost fund were a racehorse, nobody would think of racing it with such a handicap in place – but then this is fund management where different rules seem to apply.

LOOSE CHANGE

THE NORWICH & Peterborough Building Society is launching a new savings account, **Share Saver 3**, which offers a choice of tiered interest rates which can be variable or fixed. Variable rates range from 4.25 per cent gross on deposits up to £2,499 to 6.25 per cent gross on sums above £100,000. Fixed rates start at 4 per cent gross, rising to 5.5 per cent on deposits above £100,000. Accounts are limited to certain residential areas. Call 01783 372372 for details.

THE DAVID Aaron Partnership is publishing a 37-page guide to the top 50 PEPs, covering the outlook for world stockmarkets, as well as how the new tax credit system will work. Copies are available by writing to: Shelton House, High Street, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, MK17 8SD.

PERPETUAL is launching a personal pension plan which offers flexible options, including penalty-free contributions holidays and variations of contributions, free switching between funds.

no penalty for early retirement and the right to buy the best value annuity from any provider. Five funds are available, from UK to global equities. Charges are 5 per cent on each initial investment, plus a monthly fee of 0.5-1.25 per cent and a further £24 annual administration charge. Details from IFAs.

WEST BROMWICH Building Society is launching **RAPID**, a fast-track mortgage service which it claims can give a firm offer within five days on the society's entire home loan range. Applicants need a P60 and their latest pay slip, mortgage statement (where possible) and bank statement. Call 0121 6072442 for details.

FIDELITY INVESTMENTS is launching a free *Guide to Income* following research showing that a third of savers are worried about the effect of falling interest rates on the income they receive from their money. The company has also launched a new high-yield corporate bond PEP with a projected annual yield of 7.5 per cent. Call 0800 414171.

Find out why pension plans are not all the same.

Perhaps you think that all pension plans are the same. If you do, then you would be making a big mistake. Here are some of the reasons why you should consider an Equitable Pension Plan.

- THE EQUITABLE LIFE:**
- Pays no commission to third parties for the introduction of new business.
 - Has no shareholders.
- OUR PENSION PLAN:**
- Lets you retire earlier or later than planned – without penalty.
 - Lets you vary your contributions – without penalty.
 - Provides full return of fund in the event of death before retirement.

So, if you would like to find out more about how The Equitable Pension Plan is not the same as most others, call us direct on (0990) 38 48 58 or send off the coupon below for more information by post and by telephone.

www.equitable.co.uk
For your security your telephone call may be recorded
Information/advice will only be given on Equitable group products
Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority
THE EQUITABLE LIFE, FREEPOST, WILSON STREET, AYLESBURY, Bucks HP21 7BR.
I would welcome details on The Equitable's pension plans. I am self-employed ☐ I am employed and not eligible to join a company pension scheme ☐ DRA/98

NAME (Mr/Ms/Ms) _____
ADDRESS _____
Tel: (Office) _____
Tel: (Home) _____
Date of Birth _____
Postcode _____

The Equitable Life
You profit from our principles

On-line successes which point the way

LEGEND HAS it that one wealthy Wall Street trader realised that it was time to get out of shares and into cash ahead of the crash of 1929 when his shoe-shine boy started offering him share tips.

Now I have never been one to weave any kind of mystique around the stockmarket. Indeed, most of those working at the cutting edge of the Square Mile are little more than exceedingly well-paid bookies' runners. But – and it is an exceedingly large but – when the central banker of the world's largest economy, the head of the world's largest media empire, and the boss of the world's biggest software firm, Alan Greenspan, Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates respectively, all start singing from the same hymn book, we should pay attention.

You are probably aware that what they have all been saying is

that prices of Internet stocks are defying gravity but have little chance of continuing to do so.

They are, in a word, overvalued. Leaving aside all the hype, who is actually responsible for the way the share price of the likes of bookseller Amazon.com has behaved? Mostly, it is a phenomenon caused by so-called "day traders" in the US. These "day traders" are not Wall Street whiz kids – they are ordinary punters but with a difference.

You or I may invest in the stockmarket for the medium or long term. To these people, long term means a day. They may trade in and out of Internet stocks several times in a day thanks to their immediate access to the market as a result of the development of direct electronic trading through the Internet brokerages such as E-trade and Charles Schwab.



INTERNET INVESTOR
ROBIN AMLÔT

The price volatility this turnover engenders is exacerbated by the limited number of shares in issue; only just over a third of Amazon.com's shares are actually on the market.

All you need to remember is that all Internet stocks come with a serious wealth warning. Trading to take advantage of the potential capital gains in a share price always ends in tragedy. The last bubble market like this occurred in shares in Japan in the 1980s, where the stockmarket is currently around a third of the level at which it peaked. The Japanese government has now resorted to handing out free shopping coupons in a bid to boost the economy. Buying and selling your shares via the Internet is not an excuse to check your common-sense at the door on the way in.

In fact, on the way in is the best place for a reality check. If you surf the Net through a basic ISP, then why not have one of the personal finance sites such as Moneyworld as your home page? Alternatively, if your entry point is a more complex portal such as

AOL, check out the personal finance content on its pages. Now, Freeserve, Dixons' new ISP has announced plans to launch a personal finance channel.

It aims to provide personal investment information, allowing you to check the value of your shares and unit trusts and look up background information on companies in which you are considering investing.

Dixons intends to expand service in the summer to include on-line share dealing, while the Freeserve finance channel will contain investment information provided by the US group MicroCap Financial Services. Since launching in September, Freeserve has attracted a million subscribers of which, Dixons says, 827,000 are active users.

Robin can be reached at RobinAmlot@aol.com

E U R O P E A N P E P

Star Performer.

Don't miss the Grand Finale.

2% DISCOUNT before 5 April 1999†

Our European PEP has outperformed 97% of the competition over the last 5 years.

For PEPs, the curtain comes down in April 1999. Make sure you don't miss out.

For further details return the coupon or call

0345 6789 10

Quote reference no. 479DG2

SCOTTISH WIDOWS

www.scottishwidows.co.uk

*Source: Standard and Poor's Microcap L10.93-L10.96, lump sum, sterling, offer to bid prices, gross income re-invested. 535 funds in survey. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of units and the income from them can go down as well as up and is not guaranteed. Exchange rate changes may cause the value of any overseas investment to go up or down. The value of the tax advantages of a PEP depends on personal circumstances. For your protection calls to Scottish Widows may be recorded or monitored. Issued by Scottish Widows Investment Management Limited. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. †Applies to new lump sums and transfers effected by 5 April 1999.

EUROPEAN PEP

Please return to: Scottish Widows, Direct Sales,
PO Box 17036, FREEPOST SC03744, Edinburgh EH6 0BR.

Surname (Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms) _____

First Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone No. Work _____

Home _____

Date of Birth _____

We will never make your name and address available to other organisations. However, we will occasionally tell you more about our products and services which we believe will be of interest to you. If you would prefer not to receive this information, please tick this box. ☐

Reference no. 479DG2

The name is bond – corporate bond

High-yield corporate bonds could be a way to beat falling interest rates. By Rachel Fixsen

PLUMMETING INTEREST rates put a smile on the face of anyone with a variable rate mortgage. But if you want an income from your investments, the news could not be worse. Returns on building society and bank deposits are shrinking, with rates on many long-term investments falling no better.

"The fact is that yields are falling on everything, whether it's postal accounts or gilts," says Andrew Jones of independent financial advisers The David Aaron Partnership.

Corporate bonds are basically IOUs issued by companies. People who buy corporate bonds are lending to a business which pays them a fixed rate of interest, and usually promises to repay the capital back on a fixed date. They are like gilts, or UK Government bonds, but carry more risk, because the government is considered more creditworthy than most companies. So corpo-

rate bonds pay more interest than deposits, gilts or other more solid fixed-rate investments.

Once issued, the capital value of any bond fluctuates, depending on the financial health of the issuer and prevailing interest rates. This gives funds holding the bonds some scope for capital growth.

Corporate bond funds take the form of either unit trusts or open-ended investment companies (OEICs). Like equity-based funds, they can be held tax-free in Personal Equity Plans (PEPs). But from this April, corporate bond funds will have an advantage over share funds. The 20 per cent tax credit which PEP investors can reclaim on their share dividends will be cut to 10 per cent after 5 April, and disappear altogether five years later. But cor-

porate bonds will not be affected as an income is paid as interest rather than dividends.

"A lot of big players in the corporate bond market have focused on high-yield bond funds – that is a relatively new feature of the corporate bond fund market," says Jason Hollands of brokers Best Investment. "We are seeing more demand for income, and investors have been cautious about equities because of the volatility," he says.

Fund managers Perpetual, Schroders, and Fidelity have all recently launched higher yielding corporate bond funds in the retail market, following the success story of M&G. M&G started its high-yield corporate bond fund last September, marketing it alongside its existing corporate bond fund. The high-yield

PEP has a redemption yield of 7.8 per cent, compared with 5 per cent for its other corporate bond PEP.

In order to achieve that, M&G holds most of the fund's assets in what are known as sub-investment

to D for default. A bond from an issuer with a rating above BBB- is considered investment grade, but below this, sub-investment grade.

"This is where the incidence or likelihood of default increases markedly," says Tony Assender of S&P. A number of well-established companies issue sub-investment grade bonds, including IPC Magazines, Orange Telecom and BSkyB.

Investing in sub-investment grade bonds individually would be very risky, but investing in a fund holding them is much less so. The risk is spread, and fund managers believe the effectiveness of their research cuts the risk still further.

But the corporate bond market in the UK is still very small compared to the equities market, and this could limit the scope for funds.

M&G says it is glad it got in early in the high-yield end of the market.

"We were able to pick up some real bargains, and we have a portfolio that not everyone will be able to get," says Tessa Murray of M&G. For example, the fund invested early on in bonds issued by betting shop business William Hill, which has subsequently been floated on the stock market.

Andrew Jones describes corporate bond funds as the first step away from deposits in terms of risk. But that risk should not be ignored, particularly with high-yield funds.

Because of the increased risk, M&G says its high-yield fund should not be seen simply as a corporate bond fund with a high yield. "We look at it as we would an equity fund," says Ms Murray. Investors should

see it as a total return fund rather than an income-producing fund.

Andrew Jones and Jason Hollands recommend Fidelity in the high-risk corporate bond fund market, because of its vast investment research resources – important when assessing the prospects for sub-investment grade bonds.

Of the mainstream corporate bond funds, Mr Jones suggests Aberdeen Prolific and the well established CGU Monthly Income Plus. Mr Hollands prefers Legal & General for its low charging structure.

Best Investment Brokers, 0171 321 0100; The David Aaron Partnership, 01908 281544 (corporate bond PEP guide, available £2 to cover p&p); M&G, 0800 390 390 (M&G offers a guide to fixed interest investment); Aberdeen Prolific, 0345 886666; Legal & General, 0500 116622; CGU, 0845 6072439

Investing in a fund that holds corporate bonds is less risky

grade bonds – infamously known in the Eighties as junk bonds.

Ratings agency Standard & Poor's assesses the creditworthiness of a whole host of bond issuers. The ratings go from AAA+, for the most financially solid concern, right down

When you have to change with the times

As retirement looms, investment needs change. By Abigail Montrose

FOUR YEARS ago, Jean Hind decided to go part time in the run-up to her retirement. She now works three days a week at her local library and plans to retire fully next year. Jean's lifetime habit of saving has made it possible for her to look forward to a comfortable retirement.

"I realised four years ago that I had built up a good enough pension and investment portfolio to enable me to cut down on my hours at work," she says. "My pension will be sufficient to cover everyday expenses, but it is the income from my investments that will pay for luxuries such as holidays abroad and my golf club membership."

In order to be in this position, Jean's investment strategy needed to change. Over the years she had saved money in a building society and invested for growth in unit trust funds and investment trust shares.

However, she needed to look at investments which would offer her a good income in retirement, says her independent financial adviser Rory Thomson, a director James & George Colliie in Aberdeen.

Jean had a diverse portfolio, but we decided to reduce the risk and transfer into one-producing funds. We have moved from equity investments into low-risk corporate bond income PEPs and low-risk high-yield bonds. As Jean is still working part time we have not needed to take income from these investments, but when she retires we will," he explains.

The bulk of Jean's investment portfolio had been in equity growth unit trusts, perpetual UK Growth, Broders UK Enterprise and Broders European. Jean had used her PEP allowance in the past, so Rory could not simply transfer the cash from one PEP fund into another.

Instead, he has sold units in the trusts each year and invested this money in corporate bond PEPs. In the last four years, he has transferred £12,000 into the CU Monthly Income PEP and £12,000 into the M&G Corporate Bond PEP. These funds offer an annual yield of 6 to 6.5 per cent.

"The rest of the money from the original unit trusts has been invested in Commercial Union's with-profits bond and Scottish Widows's with-profits bond. These funds are paying annual bonuses of between 6 and 6.5 per cent."



When you stop earning a wage, you'll have to rely on investment income

"The original growth investments produced next to no income because all the earnings were reinvested. In the last four years we have reduced the risk and moved over to investments that provide tax-free income of about 6 per cent, and there is the potential for capital growth," says Rory.

On top of this, Jean still has £8,000 in a building society account and a fully funded Tessa. She has also kept her investment trust shares, which should provide some growth; she hopes to move these into an individual savings account after April.

Jean is lucky enough to be able to switch to low-risk investments to provide her with enough money to supplement her income. But those requiring less income or greater capital growth than she is likely to achieve may want to stick to equity funds.

The first thing to do when moving from growth funds into income funds is to work out exactly how much income you need. The more income you need, the less opportunity there is for capital growth.

A unit trust fund in the UK equity growth sector will yield 1 to 3 per cent a year, but there is potential for capital growth – whereas a fund in the UK equity income unit trust sector will yield 3 to 5 per

cent. If you have invested through a PEP this income will be tax free and there is still the opportunity for capital growth to ensure a growing income over time.

If you need more income than this, a UK equity and bond income fund may be a better option, and often the income is paid out monthly. These funds invest in fixed-interest bonds as well as equities, so the income levels may be higher, but there is less potential for capital growth.

Alternatively, investors may want to move into a UK fixed-interest fund, whereby all your money is invested in fixed-interest assets such as corporate bonds. Income may be paid monthly or quarterly. The typical yield is 5 to 7 per cent.

For more income, you could invest in the income shares of a split-capital investment trust. The income on these shares can yield up to 9 or 10 per cent. These funds offer higher yields than other funds because the income shareholders make up only a percentage of the total number of shareholders in the fund, but receive all its income.

Before you decide to switch from a growth fund to an income fund, it is worth double-checking exactly what type of fund you are in, as it is not unusual for growth investors to invest in income funds.

If it turns out that this is what you have been doing, all you need to do is start drawing out the income from the fund rather than reinvesting that income for growth.

*Estimated gross distribution gross income reinvested and redemption yield 7.8% per annum as at 11.12.98. Estimated yields will vary and up to date figures are available on request at the number below. **The dealing spread was 0.08% as at 11.12.98. The M&G High Yield Corporate Bond Fund is managed by M&G Securities Limited (regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and MRO). M&G do not offer investment advice or make any recommendations about investments. We only promote the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group. The tax regime of PEPs and ISAs may change, and the value of the tax benefits will depend on the individual circumstances of the investor. The price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up, you may not get back as much as you invested. Issued by M&G Financial Services Limited (regulated by the Personal Investment Authority). M&G House, Victoria Road, Chislehurst CM1 1TN.

The Good Buy PEP from M&G

Go out on a High.

The M&G High Yield Corporate Bond PEP Fund

Choose the M&G High Yield Corporate Bond PEP for your last-ever PEP and you'll be going out on a high. The current tax free yield is an impressive 7.8%, and there's even some potential for capital growth. What's more, there's no initial charge** and no withdrawal fee after 5 years.

Investing in bonds issued by medium sized and fast-growing companies, and drawing on the skills of our award winning fixed interest investment team, this exciting PEP Fund offers a higher yield than traditional corporate bond funds, but lower risk than stockmarket investments.

And there's another valuable benefit. Invest £1,000 or more in unit trusts through the M&G PEP before 5th April this year, and you will qualify for a voucher worth up to £200 to use when you invest in a new M&G ISA in the 1999/2000 tax year.

Make sure your PEP investments go out on a high – call now for details and application forms.

7.8%
TAX FREE P.A.*

"M&G is one of the UK's most respected bond fund management groups"

BLOOMBERG MONEY, OCTOBER 1998

M&G

OFFER EXTENDED TO 5.4.99

FREE ISA VOUCHER WORTH UP TO £200

WHEN YOU INVEST UP TO £5,000 IN THE M&G HIGH YIELD CORPORATE BOND PEP

0800 210 224

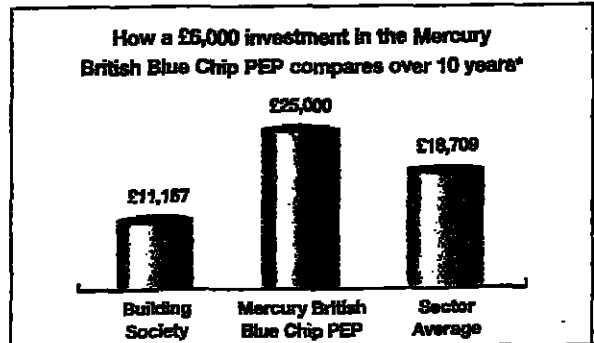
Lines are open 24 hours, 7 days a week. No salesman will call. For your protection all telephone calls may be recorded.

PEP a mint with the Mercury British Blue Chip Fund

2%
DISCOUNT

For a top performing UK PEP investment, choose the British Blue Chip Fund from Mercury. You'll be investing in many of the UK's leading companies – like British Airways, Lloyds TSB and BT. And, had you been able to invest in it through a PEP in May 1987, it would have outperformed its sector average by over 30%.

- £8,000 invested ten years ago would now be worth £25,000*
- The Fund is one of only three in its sector rated 'AAA'
- It offers an actively managed portfolio from one of the UK's leading fund managers



Fill in the coupon or call the number below for more details about the British Blue Chip PEP from Mercury, the extra strong performer.

To: Brochure Requests, Mercury Asset Management Ltd, FREEPOST M46930, London EC4B 4DD. Please send me details of the Mercury British Blue Chip PEP. PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS. If you would prefer not to receive details of other Merrill Lynch Group products, please tick this box ☐

Title _____ Surname _____
Forenames (in full) _____
Address _____
Postcode _____

0500 0500 68

MERCURY
ASSET MANAGEMENT

INPA 06/99

*Source: Standard & Poor's Fund Research. *Source: Standard & Poor's Microcap. Performance figures based on buying to selling prices to 01.01.99 with gross income reinvested. £5,000 invested 5 years ago is now worth £10,429 and has outperformed its sector by 4.8%. Sector: UK equity growth. ■ 2% discount on the buying price of units for lump sum PEP investments of £1,000 or more. Offer ends 4th April 1999. ■ You can contribute to a PEP until 5.4.99, when it will be replaced by the new Individual Savings Account (ISA). Thereafter, PEPs will enjoy the same tax benefits as ISAs, including a tax credit on dividends of 10% reclaimable for two years. ■ You should remember that past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. ■ The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise and are not guaranteed. ■ Whilst Building Society interest will fluctuate, the original capital will remain constant. ■ The Mercury British Blue Chip Fund is a unit trust managed by Mercury Fund Managers Ltd (regulated by IMRO and the Personal Investment Authority), the unit trust management arm of Mercury Asset Management Ltd. ■ The Mercury PEPs are managed by Mercury Asset Management Ltd (regulated by IMRO). ■ Issued by Mercury Investment Services Ltd, Fund & Unit Trust Managers, 100 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority, and represents only the Mercury Marketing Group and its packaged products which include unit trusts, PEPs and pensions. www.mum.com/pep ■ For your protection, telephone calls are usually recorded.

Corporate bonds aren't the answer for everyone – especially if you want long-term capital growth. By **Tony Lyons**

You profit from our principles

d rush
By Tony Lyons

Whom can I trust with my hard-earned cash?

With 600 options, it can be hard to find the best investment. By Tony Lyons

IF YOU are after a high income and want to do so through a collective investment, either in a PEP or through a direct holding, you are faced with a bewildering choice.

There are now some 600 different unit trusts, open-ended investment companies or investment trusts, whose funds range from corporate bonds, UK income growth, international high income funds and split income trusts. To take the pain out of choosing, here is what some expert independent financial advisers have to recommend.

If it's corporate bonds you are interested in, Jason Hollands of the London-based BEST Investment, recommends that you look at mainstream funds. "There are a number being launched investing in sub-investment grade loan stocks," he says, "but investors who need a reliable source of income should stick with the other funds that put their money in top quality bonds."

As charges are one of the main determinants of variation in performance, he advises to look at the Legal & General corporate bond that has no initial charge and an annual charge of just 0.5 per cent.

Among equity funds, he particularly likes Newton Income and BWD Equity Income. "Both give a reasonable yield and have shown good capital growth over the years."

Elsewhere in London, Kim North of Pretty Financial, points potential corporate bond investors at M&G Corporate High Yield, which was the first into the market with a fund that will look at higher-yielding loan stock offered by non-blue chip companies, the so-called junk bonds.

"In the past, the team managing the fund has got a good reputation for getting its investments right," says North, "and there's no reason now to think that they will start to pick up a lot of stock in companies that will default on their loans."

Among the fixed interest funds, she likes Aberdeen Fixed Interest, currently yielding around 7 per cent. "Among equity funds," she says, "you could consider the income funds from Jupiter, Perpetual, Premier and Royal SunAlliance. My overall favourite, however, is M&G High Yield, especially if it's to be put in a tax-efficient PEP wrapper."

In Shrewsbury, Philippa Gee, of Gee & Co, picks Newton Higher Income as her choice of equity funds. "This £175m fund, which has part of its portfolio in preference shares and corporate bonds, is picked for its overall total returns, both income and growth. The group takes a collegiate view, so performance is not dependent on one fund manager. It picks out mainly blue-chip companies that will produce sustained dividend growth."

From Yorkshire, Graham Bates, of Bates Investment Services, recommends an investment in Save &

Prosper's Equity Income. Like many income funds, it concentrates on blue-chip stocks - "The right place to be in the current state of the market," he says. "It's a steady, consistent performer that currently yields around 3.6 per cent."

Ailsa Brown, of RAD Young, in Glasgow, advises a look at the £160m Henderson Preference & Bond fund, currently yielding around 6.5 per cent even if "its performance has been a bit off the boil during the last 12 months". This is because preference shares have been a bit of a drag. But looking at two-year performance, the fund is sixth in the fixed-interest sector, fifth over three years and second over five years. All this time, it has had the same fund manager, according to Brown.

When it comes to corporate bonds, she recommends CGU Monthly Income Plus, presently yielding around 6.8 per cent. "It has very low volatility, meaning that it



A smooth line in sales patter is not the only consideration

shows a consistent performance, and while you expect it to show little growth, it has still increased by nearly 60 per cent over five years."

Also in Glasgow, David Thomson, of Aitchison & Colegrave, Scotland's largest firm of independent financial advisers, likes Britannia High Yield: "It has produced consistently good

interest and convertible instruments, enabling it to buy some lower-yielding growth stocks and sectors."

In Bristol, Roddy Kohn, of Kohn Cougar, advises risk-averse readers to look at M&G's conventional corporate bond. "It has a tried and tested management team, who don't invest in the riskier end of the market such as preference shares, and it is consistently in the top quarter of sector performance tables."

Among equity funds, he particularly likes City of London investment trust, which has produced a consistently rising income as well as good capital growth in asset values, and Johnson Fry Income, another consistent performer.

BEST Investment (0171-321 0100); Pretty Technical (0171-377 5754); Bates Investment Services (01332 955955); Gee & Co (01743 236892); RAD Young (0141-639 6194); Aitchison & Colegrave (0141-332 5961); Kohn Cougar (01179 465384); M&G (0800 328 3196); Britannia (0845 605 0555); CGU (0845 6072439); Aberdeen Profit (0345 886666); Henderson Investors (0800 832832); Johnson Fry (0171-839 5888); Legal & General (01222 448412); Newton (0800 614330); Perpetual (01491 416123); Premier (08706 006363); Royal & Sun Alliance (08706 016183); Save & Prosper (0800 829100); City of London Investment Trust (0171-410 4100)

A fund of knowledge

PEPs: the last chance

You will have to move fast - but help is literally at hand

THERE ARE barely two months left before personal equity plans, or PEPs, are phased out.

After 12 years of being a mainstay of anyone seeking to shelter investments from tax, they are to be replaced on April 6 by Individual Savings Accounts, another tax-free wrapper but with slightly different rules (it will still be possible to hold a PEP, of course, but they will no longer be on sale).

So this is the last chance to take advantage of a scheme offering significant benefits to anyone happy to put their money away for five years or longer.

Before April, it is possible to shelter up to £9,000 in a PEP (£6,000 in a general PEP and £3,000 in a single-company version). Couples can put away double that amount.

There is no shortage of funds prepared to accept this money. Most are expecting floods of cash in the next few weeks. The big question for any

investor, of course, is which fund to choose. Get it right and your last PEP can deliver thousands of pounds of tax-free growth in the next decade. Get it wrong and you won't have to worry about capital gains liabilities - because your fund won't have earned enough to be subject to them.

This is why The Independent has produced a "Guide to Last-Minute PEPs", written by Nic Cicutti, the paper's personal finance editor. It discusses whether PEP investments might suit your needs and what the tax benefits are - and aren't - as well as answering the most common questions about PEPs: how and where to buy them, what to look out for and what to bear in mind when buying one.

If you are considering a last-minute PEP, this guide, sponsored by Scottish Widows Fund Management, is for you. Call 0345 5678910 for your free copy.

Top notch PEPs....at rock bottom rates

1. Invesco
2. Jupiter
3. Perpetual
4. CGU
5. M&G
6. Cartmore
7. Aberdeen Profit
8. Schroder
9. Legal & General
10. Johnson Fry Slater

Investors may save up to £300 on a £6000 PEP when they send their application via PEPDIRECT. We charge just one flat fee of £25 and we rebate any initial commission back to you. We can often negotiate reductions in your PEP's initial charges too.

In the first four months of 1998 alone, we saved investors over £2 million in returned commissions and discounted charges. For a free brochure and guide, call Freephone

0800 413186

Open seven days a week

PEPDIRECT

AT TQ DIRECT CHOICE

The UK's LARGEST Flat-Fee PEP Provider

PEPDIRECT and TQ DIRECT CHOICE are registered dealing firms of Jupiter Unit Trusts, who are authorised financial advisers regulated by the Financial Services Authority. The value of investments and the income received may go up or down. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Up to 100% of the annual management fee is to be taken from capital of Growth & Income Fund, Income Trust and High Income Fund. This may accordingly restrict capital growth. For your security we may record or randomly monitor all telephone calls. If you are unsure of the suitability of this investment please contact your financial adviser. Copies of the half-yearly and annual reports may be obtained from Jupiter Unit Trust Managers Ltd, 4 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7TJ. Scheme particulars and key features documents may also be obtained from that address. Investment does not automatically give you entitlement to compensation under the Investors' Compensation Scheme; further information is available from the Investors' Compensation Scheme or the Financial Services Authority.

The star in a galaxy of PEPs



M&G INCOME
FIDELITY INCOME PLUS
JUPITER INCOME
PERPETUAL INCOME
MERCURY INCOME

Income Unit Trusts - % Growth over 5 years

It is consistent investment performance over time which will determine the value of your PEP.

Over five years Jupiter's Income Trust has handsomely beaten the top income funds from each of the leading groups shown opposite. It is also the top performing fund over 10 years and since its launch in August 1987.†

Jupiter's performance achievement stems from an active and consistent investment strategy carried through by a team of top-quality, long-serving fund managers.

For details of the Jupiter Income Trust/PEP talk to your financial adviser, call us free now or return the coupon.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL FREE ON 0800 0300 03

To: Investor Support, Jupiter Unit Trust Managers Ltd, PO Box 14470, London SW1X 7SL.

Please send me further information on:

Jupiter Income Trust ☐ The Jupiter PEP ☐ PEP Transfer ☐

Print Name (Mr/Ms/Ms) _____

Address _____

Post Code _____



Leaders in long-term performance

Jupiter Unit Trust Managers Ltd is regulated by IMRO and the Personal Investment Authority. Member of AUTIF. A subsidiary of Commerzbank AG, one of Germany's leading banks. The value of an investment in a unit trust and the income from it can go down as well as up, it may be affected by exchange rate variations, and you may not get back the amount invested. Quoted gross distribution yields of the funds are not guaranteed. Current tax levels and reliefs will depend on your individual circumstances. It was announced in the March 1998 Budget that tax credits will continue to be reclaimable in a PEP although no subscriptions can be made after 5 April 1999. From 6 April 1999 PEPs will have the same tax advantages as the new Individual Savings Account. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Up to 100% of the annual management fee is to be taken from capital of Growth & Income Fund, Income Trust and High Income Fund. This may accordingly restrict capital growth. For your security we may record or randomly monitor all telephone calls. If you are unsure of the suitability of this investment please contact your financial adviser. Copies of the half-yearly and annual reports may be obtained from Jupiter Unit Trust Managers Ltd, 4 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7TJ. Scheme particulars and key features documents may also be obtained from that address. Investment does not automatically give you entitlement to compensation under the Investors' Compensation Scheme; further information is available from the Investors' Compensation Scheme or the Financial Services Authority.

Split capital investment trusts are not for the unwary. By Abigail Montrose

Splitting images

Split capital investment trusts are not the easiest investments to understand, but if you need above average income and are worried about falling interest rates, they are worth considering.

For those who need a high income anywhere up to 12 per cent (or more) and are prepared to forego capital growth, these funds can be a deal, says Doug Kennedy, director at Globe Independent Financial Advisers, in Twickenham, Middlesex.

"You can get a higher income from the income shares of a split capital investment trust than you can from an annuity or most building society accounts. But the level of income depends on the performance of the fund and the amount of capital you are prepared to sacrifice," he says.

Split capital investment trusts are just like other investment trusts except they issue more than one class of share. When they were first introduced in the Sixties they offered just two classes of shares - income and capital shares. The income shareholders received all the dividends from the fund, while capital shareholders received the growth in the fund when it was wound up.

Since then, these trusts have become more sophisticated and many now issue several types of shares (see box for details).

None of the shares offer a guaranteed return and the ability of the fund to meet its objectives will depend on how well it performs. So before investing you should look closely at the fund as a whole.

If you plan to buy income shares which aim to return your capital in full when the trust is wound up, you should look at the "hurdle rate" and "cover" on the trust. Put simply, the hurdle rate tells you how much the fund has to grow each year to be able to meet its liabilities - a high or "positive" hurdle rate means the fund has to grow a lot to achieve this. The closer the fund is to its wind-up date,

the more important it is that it has a low hurdle rate as there is not much time left for the assets in the fund to grow.

The cover tells you if the value of the underlying assets in the fund is sufficient to cover the liabilities. High cover, such as two times cover, means the fund has assets worth double the amount needed to meet its liabilities.

As with all investment trusts, the shares are traded on the stock market so their price is determined by demand and supply rather than the value of the assets in the fund.

Mr Kennedy currently favours the income shares in the Guinness Flight geared income and growth fund. The yield on the fund is 9 per cent. The shares are trading at around 108p, but when the fund is wound up in 2006 you will only get back a maximum of 100p per share, and that is providing the fund grows 3 per cent in the meantime. Taking into account the 8 per cent drop in value by wind-up, the real yield is about 7.66 per cent.

He also likes the ordinary income shares in the Fleming Income and Capital investment trust. The fund has three years to run and has a hurdle rate of 1 per cent, which means for income shareholders to get back their capital the fund has to grow by 1 per cent.

Those wanting advice should speak to an independent financial adviser, or they could consider the Exeter High Income Trust. This is a unit trust which invests in a range of split capital investment trust shares and other high yielding shares. The current yield on the fund is 8.74 per cent after charges.

The fund is run by Chris Giles. "We spread your risk by investing in a range of investments, and you get a specialist choosing the best income shares for you," he says.

The Association of Investment Trust Companies (0171-431 5222) has published a free guide to split capital investment trusts



Whether on the dance floor or trading floor, doing the splits is best left to those who have really thought it through

MSI



Secure

a better return. Earn 7.0%¹ with our High Yield Bond PEP.

The new Schroder High Yield Bond PEP offers excellent, lower risk returns by investing primarily in a spread of carefully researched UK corporate bonds.

Take a look at the graph opposite, and you will see that over the past three years UK bond funds have steadily climbed in value, far surpassing the returns made from most high interest building society accounts. At the same time, bonds have generally avoided the volatility suffered by most equity markets.

And because bond funds can thrive in times of falling interest rates and low inflation, their future also looks bright.

So don't miss your chance to secure a high, tax-free return. Fill in the coupon below or call Schroders free on 0800 002 000 (quoting ref: 03444) to receive your free Schroder High Yield Bond PEP information pack.

Alternatively, please contact your financial adviser.

Complete and return the coupon for your FREE Schroder High Yield Bond PEP information pack to:
Schroders, Customer Services Dept, 05444 FREEPOST LON 7109, London EC4B 4PD.

Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms/Other ☐ Forename ☐ Surname ☐
Address
Postcode Date of birth

Please also send me information on Schroders' ISA range when it is available from March 30 1999. ☐

Source: 1. Schroders. Estimated gross and net (deducting unit management charges and impact on model portfolio) as at 31/12/98. 2. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 3. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 4. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 5. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 6. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 7. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 8. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 9. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 10. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 11. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 12. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 13. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 14. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 15. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 16. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 17. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 18. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 19. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 20. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 21. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 22. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 23. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 24. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 25. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 26. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 27. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 28. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 29. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 30. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 31. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 32. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 33. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 34. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 35. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 36. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 37. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 38. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 39. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 40. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 41. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 42. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 43. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 44. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 45. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 46. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 47. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 48. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 49. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 50. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 51. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 52. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 53. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 54. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 55. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 56. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 57. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 58. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 59. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 60. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 61. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 62. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 63. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 64. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 65. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 66. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 67. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 68. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 69. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 70. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 71. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 72. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 73. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 74. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 75. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 76. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 77. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 78. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 79. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 80. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 81. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 82. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 83. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 84. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 85. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 86. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 87. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 88. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 89. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 90. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 91. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 92. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 93. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 94. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 95. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 96. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 97. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 98. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 99. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund. 100. For graph, Schroders and Paine Investment. Offer to buy with units in the fund at a discount of 10% to the net asset value (NAV) of the fund.

Schroders
The name that stands for long-term performance

CALL FREE ON
0800 002 000
www.schroder.co.uk

FIXED
PRICE OFFER
ENDS FEB 12



Return on £6,000 invested
The Schroder High Yield Bond PEP
• Lower risk than equities
• Tax-free returns
• Fixed price offer if you invest before February 12

HOW TO DO THE SPLITS

■ Zero dividend preference shares pay no income, but investors receive a predetermined amount when the fund is wound up. These shares are regarded as low risk as they are first in line for any capital payout.

■ Stepped preference shares are the next priority. They provide a predetermined income which rises and a predetermined capital return.

■ Income shares provide income throughout the life of the trust. Income & residual capital shares are known as ordinary income or highly geared ordinary shares. Where a trust issues these shares with just zeros, the income and residual capital shareholders receive all the

income from the trust and any surplus capital growth at the wind up date, once the zeros are paid. ■ Capital shares are entitled to any assets left in the trust once all other classes of shares have received their entitlements.

PROPERTY



'London buyers know from experience exactly what they like: good hallways, high ceilings, French windows, south-facing rooms' - the estate agent's view

Are you looking for...

- A high monthly income?
- Tax free?
- Paid direct to you?
- From one of the most successful funds of its kind?
- Managed by a major force in investment?

Tick

You only have until 5th April to invest in the award winning CGU Monthly Income Plus PEP to receive a high monthly income, completely free of tax

Minimum investment now reduced to £3,000

Up to £60 investment bonus

Call 0800 00 44 33 quoting reference QNF

Post to: CGU MIP PEP, FREEPOST CV 1037, Stratford Upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9BR. Please send me the full details and an application form. You may receive a follow-up service call.

Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms (first name) (surname)

Address

Postcode

Tel No.

If you would prefer not to receive information on any other CGU products or services, please tick this box. ☐

CGU & you

CGU - The investment experts

Figures quoted above are based on an offer of 67.35p as at 19/01/99. Please remember that past performance is not necessarily a guide to future returns. The price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up, therefore current income levels may not be sustained and you may not get back what you invest. To maintain income, potential for capital growth may be forgone. Any significant change in interest rates would substantially affect the capital value of the fund. Securities held may have a current value higher than their ultimate maturity value. New investments may involve a PEP until the 5th April 1999, all existing PEP investments at that date may continue to be a PEP until the 5th April 1999, although this may be subject to future statutory changes. The value of tax relief depends on the circumstances of the investor, issued by the PEP Plan Manager, CGU Financial Management Limited, Regulated by the Financial Investment Authority for Investment Business, Registered in England No. 2084212. Registered Office: 2 Hoxton Street, York YO1 1JL. Member of the CGU Marketing Group which is regulated by the Financial Investment Authority under FIA 1994 for Life Assurance, Pensions and Investments.

سكرا من الاموال

rush
by Tony Lyons

Let your property work for you

Why buy a house that you never intend to move into? To rent it out to gain a regular source of income, just as millions of others do. By Simon Read

Craig Storey and Alison Godson have just splashed out £76,000 on a two-bedroom house in Cheltenham. But they don't plan to move in after they've finished renovating it in March - they hope to find a tenant.

"We had saved up quite a bit in a deposit account and thought it would be a good idea to invest it in property," says Alison. "We hope that the rental income will mean it pays for itself, and eventually grows so that we can pay off the mortgage, retire early and live off the income."

The couple renovated their own house eight years ago and were keen to work on another property. By investing their savings in it, they're hoping to build up a decent nest egg without taking any of the risks associated with the stock market.

'We advise clients that they must be prepared to invest for up to 10 years and ride out any storms'

Using property as a way to create a regular income has become big business. Around two million households rent private accommodation, and that figure is growing. The rise is encouraging more people to shy away from increasingly volatile stock market investments and pick an investment which pays a regular income - through rent - as well as offering long term growth, through the rising property market.

This has taken off in the last two years or so because of an initiative from the Association of Residential Letting Agents (Arla), which has around 1,250 members throughout the UK who are professional letting and property management agents.

It set up its Buy-to-Let initiative in September 1996 to encourage growth in the private rented sector. The aim of the initiative was to encourage lenders to make loans avail-

able to private investor landlords.

"In the past two years we have honed the attractions and opportunities of this form of property investment," says Andrew Reeves, the Arla National Council member responsible for the Buy-to-Let scheme. "Buy-to-Let gives the investor a solid investment to walk past, and a hedge that can be seen and touched."

Clydesdale Bank became the eighth member to join. The other seven are Capital Home Loans, First Active, Halifax Mortgage Services, Mortgage Express, NatWest Mortgage Services, Paragon Mortgages and Woolwich Direct. They each offer a range of Buy-to-Let loan schemes, including fixed and capped rates, that aim to be as comprehensive and competitive as the range of loans available for normal home ownership.

There are a number of lenders offering Buy-to-Let mortgages outside the Arla scheme, including the Alliance & Leicester, Bank of Scotland, Chelsea, and Yorkshire Bank. UCB Home Loans, for instance, launched its Second Property Mortgage at the end of last year, offering a two-year fixed rate of 6.99 per cent. With a minimum loan of £25,000 and maximum £250,000, the loan is aimed at customers buying a second, or third, property for rental purposes, and includes a 1 per cent cashback.

Alison and Craig took out their second mortgage through the Chelsea Building Society, which required the couple to have a 20 per cent deposit, and charged them 0.25 per cent above standard variable rates. "We recognised that currently buying a second home to let out is a very attractive prospect," says Darren Stevens of the Chelsea.

Independent financial advisers have mixed views about buy-to-let as an investment. For starters, they warn that property prices will not always increase. "We always advise clients that they must be prepared to invest for up to 10 years and ride out any storms," says Mark Howard of Maddison Monetary Management, a firm of independent financial advisers.

There can also be problems with tenants, of course. "We warn clients

to be prepared for non-payment of rent, solicitor's letters, and finally eviction," says Mr Howard.

Damage to property is a further worry for prospective landlords. "They must be prepared to spend a lot of money when a tenant leaves in order to bring it up to scratch once more, and held deposits do not always cover the expense."

"But for people who need little

borrowings this can be a good long-term investment area, especially compared with the returns offered by many deposit-based investments," he points out. But he warns: "People who need to mortgage heavily are in a far worse position, as they need to be collecting some heavy rent in order to make a profit on a monthly basis."

Lenders expect a "loan to value"

on the property of 75-80 per cent, and are prepared to advance between £15,000 and up to £500,000, although First Active is unique in offering up to £1m per property. The length of loan varies between five and 30 years, although Halifax Mortgage Services and Mortgage Express are prepared to lend for 45 years.

Confusingly, most lenders operate different structures in working

out income multiples. As you'd expect, most take into consideration the expected rental income, but the level of that varies widely.

Manchester Building Society, for instance, lends up to six times the annual rental income. The Bank of Scotland, on the other hand, operates on the basis that it will lend on the standard basis of three times one income plus one times the second

More and more investors are putting their money into property to let, to get a regular income from rent and a solid capital investment

Peter Cook

or 2.5 times joint income, less the existing mortgage, plus five times the rental income.

Lenders can be as aggressive in the buy-to-let arena as they are in the general market place. At the time of going to press, it was possible to pick up a 6.74 fixed rate for up to 10 years through the Yorkshire Bank, or a 6.99 capped rate until 2002 through Alliance & Leicester.

income plus one times the second

income plus one times the second

income plus one times the second

The European Index-Tracking PEP

Legal & General have tracked down the leading companies in Europe

Now you can share in the success that has seen 67.39%* growth in just over two years

The Legal & General European Index-Tracking PEP is a low cost way to share in the potential growth of the leading European companies.

By tracking the top companies in the 15 largest stock markets across Europe (excluding the UK) Legal & General can take advantage of the excellent opportunities available to make your investment work harder for you. In fact, with the European Index-Tracking PEP you'll be investing in some of the most successful names in Europe including BMW, Nestle, Bayer,

Nokia and KLM.

Because Legal & General has one of the lowest charges for an overseas PEP on the market and makes no initial charges for lump sum investments it means more of your money is put to work straight away. And year after year low charges mean more of your money is reinvested to give you a greater potential return. What's more, Legal & General have no withdrawal charges, so you can access your money at any time without penalty.

So, to take advantage of low charges and the growth potential of investing in some of the leading companies in Europe, call now for further details about the Legal & General European Index-Tracking PEP.

No initial charge on lump sum investments

0.75% annual management charge

No withdrawal fee

67.39%*
GROWTH IN JUST 18 MONTHS
OVER 2 YEARS

BMW DAIMLER BENZ VW
ADIDAS OLIVETTI BAYER
NOKIA SANYO EUROFLY
NEO RENAULT PEUGEOT
SIMPSON DEUTZMAN BANK
PIRELLI P&G PHILIPS
KLM ERICSSON VOLVO

Visit our web site at www.LandG.com

Find out more now - call freephone 0500 1166 22

Sam to 8pm weekdays
9am to 5pm weekends

For your protection, calls are usually recorded and routinely monitored.
Please quote ref D60163

Yes I would like more information about the Legal & General European Index-Tracking PEP.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Star performers usually show early talent



- No.1 over 3 months
- No.1 over 6 months
- No.1 over 12 months
- No.1 over 2 years
- No.1 over 3 years
- Top 2 over 5 and 7 years

Lots of youngsters show early promise, but it's not many that develop into a really outstanding success like our Premier Dividend PEP. An investment which has proved itself a top performer in the UK Equity Income Sector, a sector that contains over 70 funds.

Why not invest in our star performer, in this the last PEP investment year.

Premier Dividend PEP

EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Contact your usual financial advisor or call 0800 212577 now or complete and return the coupon.

Premier Portfolio Managers Ltd
Premier House, 25/27 Chertsey Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4HG
Registered by DMO Members of AITF & FIMA

Source: Standard & Poor's Mitrail - www.mitrail.com - 11/98 based on offer to offer not income reviewed.

Please send me further details on the Premier Dividend PEP

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

NEW PEP 1% discount until 5 April 99

Best performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The price of units and the income from them may go down as well as up and you may get back less than you invested. Exchange rates will also cause the value of underlying overseas investments to fall or rise. Tax concessions are not guaranteed and may be changed at any time; their value will depend on individual circumstances.

Issued by Premier Portfolio Managers Limited



the stock market
uncertainty in
your stride

The Equitable

No more 'four-eyes' jibes – glasses are the fashion accessory everyone wants to wear. By Karen Falconer

The eyes have it: if you want to be hip, get some frames

If you want to be trendy, now is the time to be short-sighted. Glasses (yes, it's cooler to be in your face than ponce about with words like face furniture, occhiali, eyewear or even "spectacles") are the latest, must-have accessory.

Once banished from magazine pages, pop icons, from Robbie Williams and the Gallaghers to Annie Lennox and Scary Spice, are flaunting them; magazine shoots are full of them. Next week alone sees the UK launch of collections from Philippe Starck/Alain Mikli, *Loaded* magazine and French Connection.

Indeed, most fashion designers have already complemented their sunglasses collections with them – Armani, Paul Smith, Dolce & Gabbana, Jill Sander, Calvin Klein, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Katharine Hammett. You name them, almost without exception they'll be there. And soon the high street brands will surely be following them en masse. These days, glasses have moved on a long way from the associations they once had with greasy haired, acned geeks.

Take the new glasses vocabulary. Out are taunts like "men don't make passes" and "specy four-eyes"; in is a new bedroom speak of sex, love and passion. You "love" your glasses, you're "passionate" about the ones you buy, "our glasses make you look sexy".

Clearly the marketeers have moved in on the dowdy, clinical optician's world. They've opened their eyes to the fact that Britain may be a fashion leader, but it's a long way behind its European and US counterparts in the glasses department (the Italians buy six pairs of glasses for every pair sold here). And cutting-edge consumers are already lapping it up (sales of spectacles have grown 62 per cent in five

'The British have always separated the art and the design of wearing glasses, perhaps because they feel opticians are purely medicinal'

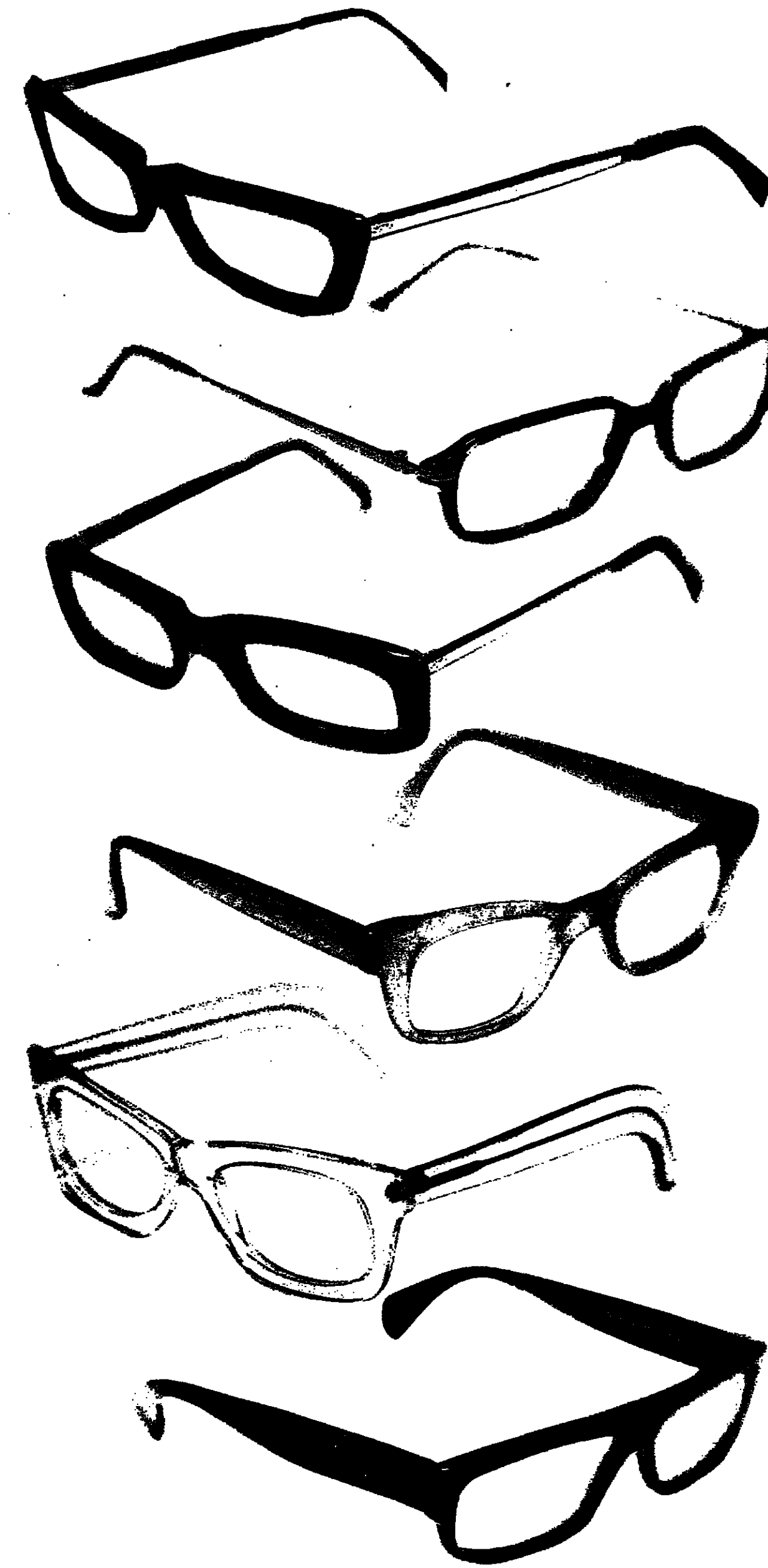
years to over £2bn annually and, as the population ages, stand to show further dramatic increases).

"It's very strange that we've been so far behind in fashion terms," says Jason Kirk of Kirk Originals, whose Covent Garden store is one of the new breed of eyewear retailers, selling themselves as style consultants rather than opticians. "For some reason the British have always separated the art and science of wearing glasses. I think it's because of the lingering feeling that opticians are purely medicinal. But now opticians are coming into the market who aren't just sitting around waiting for people to wander in like a dentist's surgery does."

Kirk, the son of a provincial optician, is keener on the artistic side: he sells glasses, has facilities to make lenses, and machines to fit the best specs to your face; but he doesn't do eye tests – you have to arrive with your prescription in hand. In fact, he sells at least one pair a week with plain glass.

He's also fervent about re-dressing the British face, and is one of the leading lights behind London's first eyewear trade exhibition (London International Optics) next weekend, which launches with around 100 top optical designers, 30 or 40 of them new to Britain. As Alain Mikli, a leading French eyewear designer and LIO exhibitor, says: "Today it's very interesting to do business in the UK because it's an open market."

Mikli, who set up in France 20 years ago, sells all round the world, but his company only started selling direct to the UK last September. Now in addition to his own ranges, Mikli is topping the bill with his old friend, iconic furniture designer Philippe Starck. And, as well as launching the new Starck/Mikli collection, Star-



Taking it from the top – prices are for frames only: Hattie in jet, limited edition frames with original Sixties sides, £225, Kirk Originals; French Connection plastic tortoiseshell frames, from £30; Ruby in azur, £225, Kirk Originals; red, clear and black plastic frames, £100 each, Cutler & Gross

ck Eyes, in this country later in the year, he's also bringing out a collection with Issey Miyake and working with Jill Sander.

"Before, you could have nice clothes and ugly glasses and no one would say anything," he says. "Now glasses are as much a statement as the clothes. You have to play with glasses. We play with shoes, with belts, with hairstyles and we have to play with glasses too".

"Everyone else is now doing the retro look – the Fifties and Sixties – but Philippe and I are looking towards tomorrow, to the third millennium. Nothing too fancy, just designed by Starck and Mikli: but very technical and practical, the minimum for the maximum."

Hard on the heels of the fashion designers comes French Connection, one of the first high-street brands to step into the glasses market. And its rationale is the same: "Eyewear is a natural extension to the lifestyle we are now selling," says Jill Read, the licensing director, about the new French Connection and lower-priced FCUK ranges.

"What people have on their face is the most visible thing they are wearing, and they are putting more and more money into high design and high quality instead of the stock frame. The whole world has been doing it, but the British are just getting into it."

The new collection comes in 40 styles including navy, deep reds and pinks, but Read adds a cautionary note: "A high percentage of people will not wear those fashion colours, so we are also stocking classics like tortoiseshell and blacks."

It's not just a question of British reserve, though. Strong colours sit less well on pale faces than on more olive-tinted continental skins. According to Natahe Warren, of celebrity eyewear company Cutler & Gross (clients include Leonardo

'What people have on their face is the most visible thing they're wearing, and they are putting more money into high design and quality'

di Caprio and Elton John), this may be one reason why the Brits have been slow to take risks. "It's easier to wear strong colours if you have darker skins, so we don't experiment with colour."

Stylistically, Cutler & Gross says the mood is swinging away from the boxy, masculine look that's dominated recently towards less Fifties-style plastic (acetate) frames – and, increasingly, customers are buying a new pair of specs each season. "We're keeping the frames small and sharp, not Jackie O, because people are more likely to experiment with frames if they are small: they don't feel so conspicuous. We're selling a lot of light tints – pinks, blues, yellows. Specs to give a look."

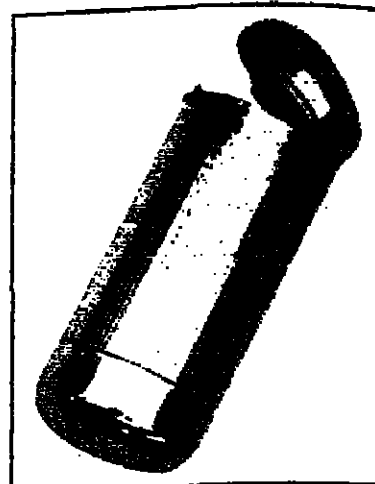
If image is all important, are contact lenses heading down a sidetrack? Not so, insists Nish Kotecha of the opticians' chain David Chlow, which has seen a 15 per cent year-on-year rise in sales of glasses. "People are combining the two," he says. "Wearing glasses for work and contact lenses for activities like sport."

The world of fashion is indeed a fickle business. Ten years ago, glasses were seen as a necessity; today they're very definitely an accessory. Yet, whatever the pundits say, what sells well depends on who wears what, and when. For now, at least, the stars' clear focus on glasses will keep them up there in the limelight.

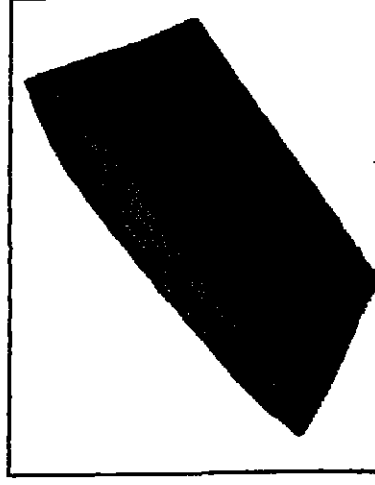
Stockists: Kirk Originals (0171-240 5055); Cutler & Gross (0171-581 2250); David Chlow (0171-486 1485); French Connection (0171 399 7200); Starck Eyes (0171 431 7316) – French Connection and Starck Eyes only available from the end of March.

London International Optics (0181 987 7540) is at Olympia, London, 13 to 15 February, trade only.

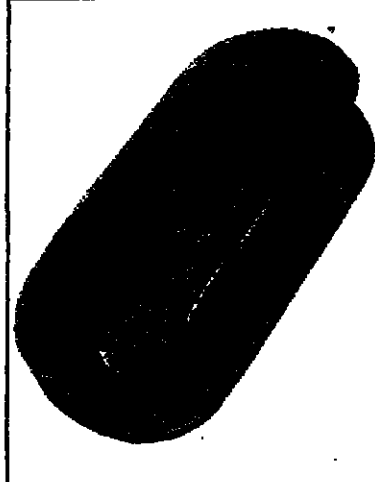
SIX OF THE BEST GLASSES CASES



Flip-top "Authentic" case, £7.95, Optimum, (01332 363 808)



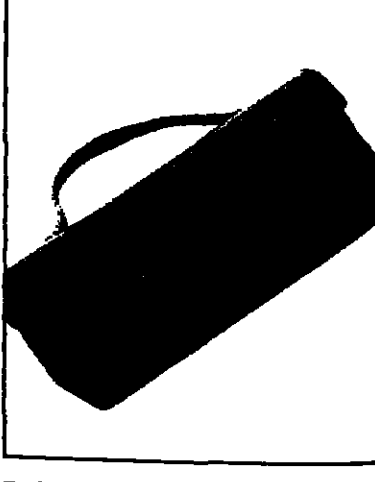
Black case, £10, Cutler & Gross (0171-823 8445)



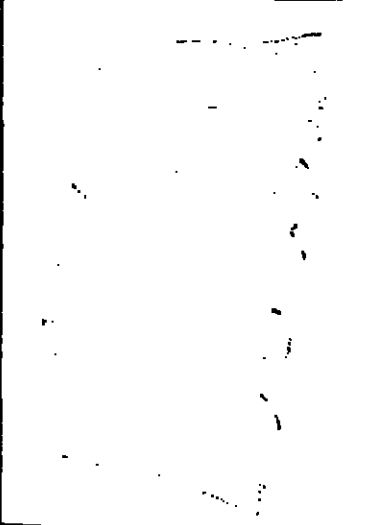
Blue Aston case, £9.95, The Conran Shop (0171-589 7401)



Flat green leather case, £20, Smythson (0171-629 8558)



Red glasses bag, £15, Cutler & Gross (0171-823 8445)



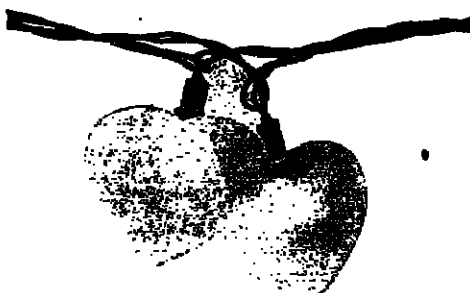
Inflatable sunglasses case, £9.95, The Conran Shop (0171-589 7401)

GOOD THING



If you're fed up with gray dismal days wear a pair of Hearts glasses and transform your world. The rose-tinted lenses soften the harshness of the British climate as well as cutting out those harmful UV rays. They are sold by SkyBlue Pink (01280 840689) at a special Valentine's Day price of £20.

MAD THING



The object of your affections hasn't quite noticed the love light in your eyes, but take heart. Help is at hand in the form of Heart Lights, a three-metre string of 10 heart-shaped lights which costs £14.99, from Urchin Mail Order (0800 328 1029). Guaranteed to cast a romantic glow over proceedings.

SHOPTALK

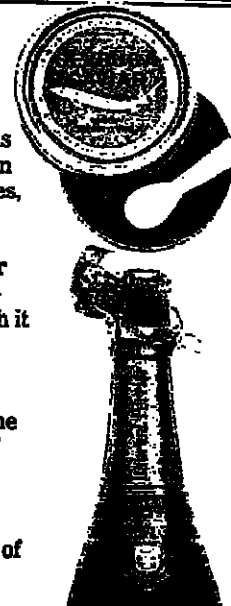
Look no further if unadulterated decadence is the way to your lover's heart and convenience is the way to yours. The leading caviar importer, W G White, has joined forces with the Laurent-Perrier champagne house to create a seductive offer for Valentine's Day.

A bottle of Laurent-Perrier Brut NV champagne, a 125g tin of fresh, chilled Iranian Sevruga caviar and a mother of pearl spoon will be delivered to your door for £55 (plus £4.50 for delivery). A saving of £35 on the usual price. All you need to do is call 07000 238 427, and allow 48 hours for delivery.

William George White set up his company in 1895 to bring the very

best caviar to the UK. Little has changed over the years – caviar is still packed in tins at sea and then transported here in wooden crates, chilled but never frozen.

Caviar is traditionally accompanied by ice-cold vodka or chilled champagne, and Laurent-Perrier's light, dry style goes with it particularly well. Caviar should always be scooped from the tin vertically from top to bottom to avoid crushing the eggs, hence the spoon provided. You can eat it off the back of your hand at the junction of the thumb and forefinger, but that's just one suggestion. No doubt you'll think of many more.



I WANT TO OWN ...
POCKETABLE GADGETS

You can take it with you, after all

Not too long ago, blue denim jeans were the epitome of masculinity. The art was squeezing into a pair two inches too small around the waist, after which retrieving a wallet, let alone loose change was near impossible. But what did that matter? Wasn't the whole point of them that we were just about to dig a ditch, or lasso some cows or something?

Now, of course, most of us have wised up and are walking round town in designer Desert Storm wear - combat trousers with enough pockets to hold Iraq's war machine. But what have we got in those huge, stitched-on, ripcord cotton handbags substitutes that have a nasty habit of getting snagged on door handles? Absolutely nothing.

So, for every self-respecting, pre-millennium, gadget-fixated psychotic, here's the checklist of all the things you should slip into your cargo pants before leaving the house each morning:

PACKET OF TUNES

Name: Rio MP3 Player
Price: £199
Stockist: 01189 444 477
Description: It fits in the palm of your hand, has simple buttons and promises jog-free portable music. The MP3 player marks the end of software as you know it (hence the somewhat hazy legality of their use). This music system has no moving parts, just a 32MB memory which stores around 30 minutes worth of music files which you've hot wired from the web using a PC. Unlike its rival, the more sharply dressed MPMan (£300, 07060 607 78), it also has a slot for a flash memory card, meaning you needn't be restricted to the music you've installed on the machine - after all you would you ever go on holiday with just one cassette?

Style: ★★★
Anything else worth considering? If music quality is your first priority rather than technological snob value, then several mini disc player/recorders outperform both. Kenwood's blue DMC-J7R(BL)

(£250, 01705 476 000) and Sharp's silver MD-MS722H (£250, 0800 262 958) encapsulate sound and design vision and both come with impressive watch-style LCD remote controls as standard.

THE COMMUTER COMMUNICATOR

Name: Alinco DJ-C5
Price: £189
Stockist: 01705 662 145
Description: They may be stopping you from lying your brain, but ear pieces are a sartorial disaster. Mobile phone users are increasingly looking like extras from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* as they stroll down the street apparently talking loudly to nobody. Could this herald the return of an out-of-date communications medium, such as CB? Legality aside (you need an amateur radio licence to live out your Big Bird/Rubber Duck fantasies), this pocket-sized, trucker walkie-talkie has it all - a sleek silver body, bright yellow buttons and a five-mile range. Now you can check in with all of your mates around the city at the same time.

Style: ★★★
Anything else worth considering? Okay, so you really do want a mobile phone. In the midget microwave stakes, Sony's CSM-Z1 plus GSM (£20 with connection, 0990 111 999) deserves special mention, combining minuscule size, short voice memo, calendar, clock and alarm.

KEYS ARE GOOD

Name: EFX Flashing Keyring
Price: £8.50
Stockist: 01789 450 005
Description: This looks like a miniature version of a brake light tail fin on an old Cadillac. What it is, though, is the descendant of those key fobs you whistled at when you couldn't find them amid the rubble of your bachelor pad. Only this one flashes when your mobile is ringing. Just don't clip it to your trousers.

Style: ★★★
Anything else worth considering? If you would rather amuse yourself playing retro games, then Vivid Imagination and Nintendo have come up with a range of micro Gameboy key rings, which includes

versions of old games such as Donkey Kong and Super Mario (£3, 01702 200 660).

MEMORY JOGGER

Name: Olympus D1000
Price: £300
Stockist: 0800 072 0070
Description: This simple to use, silver, slimline message recorder is the latterday equivalent of the micro cassette recorders that no self-respecting FBI agent would once have been seen without. Instead of groovy little cassette tapes, however, the D1000 records around 30 minutes of material on to 2MB flash memory cards.

Style: ★★★
Anything else worth considering? There are several other cheaper digital recorders, including the cartoon-voice, bubble-styled Sony Voice Balloon (£26, 0990 111 999) - but the disadvantage is that it records only 10 minutes of material.

POCKET BLOCKBUSTERS

Name: Panasonic DVD-L10EB
Price: £999
Stockist: 01344 862 444
Description: It would have to be a very big pocket, but it would be worth permanently stretching the fabric to squeeze in this silver dream machine, a portable laptop-style disc

player for video CDs, audio CDs and, most importantly, digital versatile discs: CD-sized discs on which are crammed whole films plus lots of gimmicky extras such as biographies, trailers and subtitles. The quality of the small screen is breathtaking, but if you want to see the bigger picture, you can plug it into a larger screen when you get home. You need never be at the mercy of the inflight movie programme again.

Style: ★★★★★
Anything else worth considering? When it makes it to the marketplace, Sony's DVD Discman (£700, 0990 111 999) promises to be marginally more compact but has no built-in screen

VISION ON

Name: Sony Ravi
Price: £550
Stockist: 0990 111 999
Description: It rhymes with groovy and for a good reason. This lightweight (380g), miniature digital still camera also doubles up as a camcorder, and can record up to 30 minutes' worth of wedding receptions. It has a zoom and an audio facility

and runs on two AA batteries. Other than that, it is thankfully devoid of the gimmicky extras that often persuade you to buy a product that you'll rarely use. The downside is the high price of the video cartridge.

Style: ★★★★★
Anything else worth considering? For those wanting to record digitally, Sony also does a more chunky, complicated camcorder, the DCR-PC1 (£1,399), which includes a handy pop-up, 5cm colour screen and a Carl Zeiss lens. Francis Ford Coppola, eat your heart out.

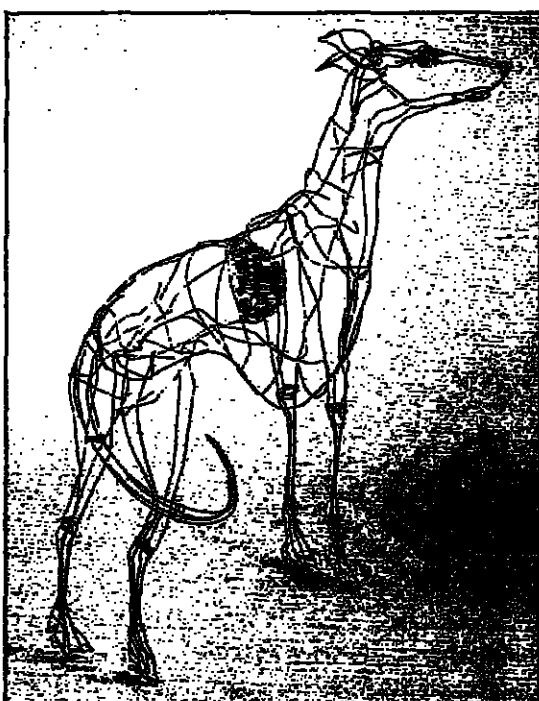
SHAUN PHILLIPS
DEPUTY EDITOR, ZM MAGAZINE

CHECK IT OUT

THE BLUECOAT CENTRE, LIVERPOOL

THE HACKNEY Contemporaries art show opens at the Bluecoat Display Centre in Liverpool on 9 February. There are probably more designer-makers per square mile in Hackney than anywhere else in Europe, and this is reflected in the diverse nature of the decorative arts that are displayed by the selected makers: furniture, glass, ceramics, metalwork and textiles.

Like the East End of London, Liverpool's docklands have been undergoing a mini-renaissance in recent years, losing in the process their seedy and derelict image. Artists and designers who were originally drawn into the area by its low rents have made a significant contribution to this regeneration. They've been helped in this by the activities of the Bluecoat Display Centre, which was established to exhibit and sell contemporary work by designer-makers in a variety of media. (You'll find the Centre in the laundry of the former Bluecoat School, which was built in 1717 to educate the orphans of seafarers.) The exceptionally high quality of the work in this show is a reflection of what is happening in Hackney, but is also a fair indication of the Centre's reputation and ability to attract, and, more importantly, sell the work of some of the best designer-makers in Britain today. Sculptor Thomas Hill is happy to be showing at the Bluecoat Centre again: "It has an excellent client base: people seem really enthusiastic." His views are



echoed by textile designer Rachael Howard. She grew up in Merseyside before moving south in the early Nineties. "Liverpool has become quite lively over recent years. It was always Manchester that had the interesting work, but Liverpool is bubbling upwards."

So what's on show here? Thomas Hill's wire birds and animals are not

chicken wire constructions reminiscent of forms destined to be covered with papier mâché, but simple, evocative outlines - yellow hens, pike, greyhounds - conjured into life from the barest of skeletons. Occasionally he adds cut and painted sheet-steel, although this in no way detracts from the lightness of the pieces.

Rachael Howard combines quirky screen-printed drawings with applied fabrics and machine embroidery to produce cushions, wall-hangings, scarves and ties. Her subjects are everyday scenes and activities which she captures with a comic vitality.

Thus Davies hews her chairs from green (unseasoned) timber -

elm, ash, oak, holly or cherry - using traditional green woodwork techniques. Much of the work is done by hand and, as a result, each piece is a one-off. Batch production is impossible. Initially inspired by the simplicity of Welsh stick chairs, she has now developed a way of working with the shapes revealed in the split timber.

Bettina Kunkel also specialises in one-off pieces of furniture. She only uses British, European or North American woods for her freestanding pieces, using rarer timbers such as yew and rippled lime when they are available. Her work is influenced by art deco designs and the simplicity of Japanese furniture.

Emma O'Dare's decorative glass

From left to right: Thomas Hill's Whippet 1998, from £350; Titus Davies's English greenwood chair made of ash with an elm seat, £322.50; detail from Rachael Howard's 'Animal Panimal' wall-hanging, 130 x 200 cm, £1,200

vessels recycle old glass using the ancient technique of *pâte de verre*. Her glass looks volcanic, not dull but phosphorescent, and full of light. All these makers are linked by the vitality of their work. This energy is also apparent in the other exhibits, including Sian Tucker's geometric and vibrantly coloured textile hangings; Nicholas Arroyave-Portela's undulating clay vessels; and Karen Bunting's monochrome jugs, plates and bowls, delicately decorated with spots and stripes.

Obviously, as a selling exhibition, you can buy what's on display, but don't forget, if someone else has beaten you to that perfectly poised wire chicken or you'd prefer a turkey buzzard, you can always commission exactly what you want.

DIONA GREGORY

Hackney Contemporaries runs 9 February to 6 March, Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm at the Bluecoat Display Centre, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BX. Tel: 0151-709 4014. You can e-mail the gallery on crafts@bluecoat.u-net.com, or visit its website at <http://bluecoatcrafts.merseysideworld.com>

Buyers go in for old not new

Purchasers looking for a home with an old-fashioned period feel won't settle for any imitations. By Penny Jackson

It is an irony that many people who live in old houses, and express horror at the thought of buying a new home, are often among the first to say that they would love to build from scratch. "Give us a site and we'll show how we would really like to live." But take them to the homes on offer now and they will run a mile, back to the last century.

Are they prejudiced beyond hope or simply not being given what they want? A recent survey by the

time and money on research, but it can be rather like preaching to the converted. If they focus just on their pool of customers, they will be hearing from only 28 per cent of the home-owning population.

"They need to study the occupiers who don't usually buy new homes," says Yolande Barnes, of F P D Savills Research. "These buyers have to be seduced. It is no good just matching the second-hand market, it has to be exceeded."

In leafy Wandsworth, in south-west London, a house that sells for £1m no longer gives cause for comment. Buyers have moved southwards in search of space they can afford, and for a choice of good schools. Generally, this means Victorian or Edwardian, four or five bedrooms, two or three bathrooms, a garden and close to the common.

So a plot in a good street is a rare opportunity to woo buyers away from the old. Thirstone Homes did their homework. Two red-brick, Edwardian-style, semi-detached houses mirror in almost every respect their neighbours in Lyford Road, with the extra advantage of off-street parking. The high ceilings demolish the usual criticism of feeling like being cramped.

The drawing room is comfortably large and the kitchen runs into a light and sunny family room. At the top of the house, under the eaves, is a study and studio bedroom with



Lyford Villas, an example of a new home that tries hard to overcome buyers' prejudices

bathroom. As a package, these are all features that local buyers would have on their list. But just as it seems to be there, it stumbles and falls.

The "executive home" touch is the spoiler. A top-to-toe tiled bathroom and mirrored bedroom cupboards are more hotel than home. And these are buyers who are likely to want a coal fire, not look-alike gas. They have wet labradors and children with muddy boots but nowhere to put either. It is not that these houses won't sell well, but that they are unlikely to break through the old/new barrier.

"Everything south of the river

gets stamped with the Surrey mark," says Jonathan Seal, of Hamptons International. "London buyers are specialised, and know from experience exactly what they like. They are prepared to pay for houses with good hallways, high ceilings, French windows, wooden sash windows, larders, large south-facing rooms. They don't mind much about formal dining rooms or garages."

"There is no guarantee that the developer you are advising will instruct you in the end. That's the name of the game. It is tempting for some to tell a developer what he wants to hear."

Often the advice can be simple. Margaret McKenna, of John D Wood's Battersea office, has suggested that housebuilders employ a local interior designer, to avoid the inevitable clash of style that can put off buyers attracted to the area.

A great deal of money can be wasted on putting things on floors and walls that typical purchasers don't like. And if buyers find properties overpriced and overrated, it is often because they act on the valuation, not the specifications. "We might have to say that we can't now sell their property for £500,000 because they haven't done anything

we suggested," says John Collard, of Robert Holmes in Wimbledon.

It is not as though buyers in the second-hand market are difficult to read. Estate agents' particulars, and glossy style magazines, give a blueprint at a glance. "You have to create an illusion of old money, of something that has been lived in," says Yolande Barnes. "The bookshelves either side of the fireplace, the fire surround, the sofas facing each other. You see it everywhere. They want period style without the period inconvenience, and not just a complete pastiche."

"Staircases can be wider, and

the plumbing and wiring should make for easy living. But new London houses are more difficult to get right than flats. The one thing that really doesn't work is brand name marketing."

At Lyford Villas there is a stone plaque between the two front doors. It reads: "Thirstone Homes 1998." Surely the last thing any buyers spending more than £300,000 want is to be seen advertising a product, however discreetly.

Lyford Road Villas, priced from £375,000 through agents Robert Trindle (0181-767 2222)

'You have to create an illusion of old money - of something that's been lived in'

Popular Housing Forum concludes that the new homes market in the UK is a niche operation appealing to a small sector of the population.

Some 72 per cent have not bought, or would not consider buying, new homes, and tend to think of them as boxy, cramped and homogenous. While the vast majority of those who took part in the survey opted for a traditional facade, there was a strong demand for a re-think about the way we live.

All good developers will spend

2,000, a space odyssey: where to find it, how much to pay

Forget the Dome - rent your own millennium party space, but be prepared to pay the price. By Mary Wilson

NOW WE are well into 1999, people are thinking seriously about what they are going to do to celebrate the passing of the millennium. A good number of families are considering renting a property for the New Year week to entertain their friends and guests.

In response, house owners are starting to put up their homes up for rental for just that week, encouraged by the lure of mega rents, possibly up to five times the normal going rate.

Suzanne Coker, who lives with her husband, James, in Barton-on-the-Heath in the Cotswolds, has a large house with an adjoining cottage which she is just starting to let out. "We had considered inviting a few friends up for the millennium weekend and putting them up in the cottage. But we have been told by local rental agents that we could get a very good return and that is just too tempting."

The cottage, which sleeps five, with a large dining room, sitting room and wood-burning stove, is usually let

'Many owners prefer to let to families, as they are less likely to celebrate with a bang'

for £350 to £400 a week, but with the possibility of earning at least £800 for that one week, they hope to take a short, but extravagant, holiday later in the year. "We will just stay with friends," says Suzanne.

Although the Cokers are looking at doubling their rent, larger properties are being let for up to five times the norm. Warren de Longe of Blandings, the country-house holiday-rental agent, which is offering a number of properties for the millennium, says: "Most of the larger houses are going to be let to couples or couples wishing to celebrate the event, rather than families."

"While these groups are often willing to spend greater sums of money, many of our owners prefer families, as they are less likely to bring in the millennium with a bang."

The most expensive property the company is offering for the New Year week is Hatton Castle, near Turfiff, Aberdeenshire. This has eight bedroom suites, and will cost £25,000 per week, excluding staff. For a little bit less, you could take Braxted Park in Witham,



Suzanne Coker hopes her Cotswold cottage will subsidise a dream holiday

John Lawrence

Essex, which is a nine-bedroom country house, at £30,000 for the week. Then there is St Catherine's Court near Bath, Somerset & Avon, a 14th-century property, which accommodates 16, for £40,000 or, Widecombe Manor in Devon, a 19th-century manor house sleeping 14, for £15,000 - or just over £1,000 a week per person.

Leon Betchley of Countrywide

Residential Lettings covers the south coast of England. He says: "I am getting an awful lot of enquiries from the Home Counties and London, especially from large families or parties. Within the last two weeks we have taken 50 enquiries."

He reckons that a four-bedroom property usually let out for £450 to £500 a week could easily command £1,500

to £2,000, and he is advertising for suitable property. He already has a few houses on his books in the Isle of Wight, and these include Cove Cottage, a three-bedroom cottage at Ventnor; The Barn, a four-bedroom house at Whitwell; and Stoneplace Cottage with three bedrooms at Ventnor. They will all be available for around £800.

Many of the properties already

available for renting over the New Year are in Scotland. Robert Rattray of Finlayson Hughes of Perth, which has published a special millennium brochure, says: "We have been inundated with enquiries for large and exclusive venues."

Several of the 16 properties are already booked, and of those still available you could take Burnknowe at Lochgilblhead, Argyll, sleeping eight for £5,000 a week. Densfield Farmhouse in Trinity Gask, Perthshire, for £5,500, or Lochiehead at Auchtermuchty, Fife, sleeping 14, plus four in a cottage, for £12,500 a week.

Knight Frank's Edinburgh office has also been asked by some of its clients to find tenants over the millennium week. Properties up for grabs range from stately homes to castle and shooting lodges. "Some are fully staffed, others are self-catering farmhouses, and packages are being tailored to meet people's individual requirements wherever possible," says Colin Strang Steel.

One property available is Strathgrym at St Andrews, Fife. Twelve people staying here would have use of the drawing room, library, billiard room and dining room, and the £30,000 for seven nights includes all meals and drink.

Also in Scotland, F P D Savills has several properties available for that week. On the Airtie Estate, for example, Cortachy Castle, which sleeps at least 20 people, is available for £24,000 for four days; and Wellbank Cottage, which sleeps six to eight people, £2,000 for the week.

You should, of course, insure your home while it is rented out over the millennium week. A standard buildings and contents insurance will not cover the property if it is let and anything untoward occurs, and it is unlikely that a high street or telephone insurance company would countenance such an extra liability.

Countrywide say it is encouraging people to take a very much larger deposit than usual - £300-£400, as opposed to £50-£100 - to cover any damage. And it is offering an insurance package covering all liabilities, which will cost around £150-£200, depending on what has to be covered.

Suzanne Coker, 01608 674603; Blandings, 01223 233444; Finlayson Hughes, 01738 451111; Countrywide Residential Lettings, 01983 821111; Knight Frank, 0131-225 8171; F P D Savills, 01356 628600

STEPPING STONES ONE COUPLE'S PROPERTY STORY



East (Dulwich) is Eden for Ann Ball Mark Chikors

SINCE 1980 Ann Ball and her partner Norm have bought four south London properties. They now live in a three-storey Victorian house in East Dulwich.

It was in 1985 when, at the age of 30 and in a stable job as a housing association director, Ann decided "to get into the house-owning democracy".

Her first flat was an impulse buy, a one-bed conversion carved from the hall floor of a house in Brockley for £24,500. "It had the most amazing huge rooms looking out to an enormous garden."

But the prospect of external renovations was worrying: "It was a big house and the other flats were mostly rented so I knew that one day I could get saddled with a large bill." In 1987 Ann, a lover of Victoriana, sold for £45,000 and bought a freehold property in Deptford's Friendly Street.

The two-bedroom, Victorian cottage had a walled garden which, although "a mess", was lovingly restored by Ann, who created raised beds and a patio. She enjoyed the house and garden but not the noise from the busy road.

In 1989, having met Norm, she decided to rent out her house and move into a two-bedroom flat in Clapham which Norm had bought for £25,000 in 1980. The rental was not a total success: "The first tenants were fine but the second lot junked it. When they left I found dirty washing up and pans everywhere with beans stuck to them."

Prices had bottomed out, but in 1991 Ann sold at the purchase price and, having had a daughter, Alice, decided to buy a family home. She and Norm paid off the Clapham flat's mortgage and rented it out but could not find an affordable house nearby.

East Dulwich, a few miles away, offered more for money and prompted another of Ann's impulses. She remembers saying: "I have to have this. It was fabulous, you could just see the potential." It cost £117,000 in 1992, and features such as a butter sink and original brass taps in the bathroom help understand the instant appeal. The couple have carried out improvements such as resiting the kitchen and adding a conservatory - and while Norm will "never move to another house where he'll have to do all this work", it is hard to see why they would ever want to.

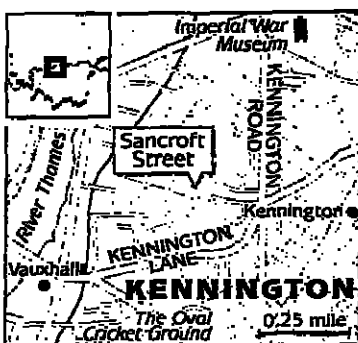
GINETTA VEDRICAS

Those moves in brief... 1980 - two-bedroom flat for £25,000, now worth £180,000. 1985 - one bedroom flat for £24,500, sold for £45,000. 1987 - £69,995 house, sold for same in 1991. 1992 - three-storey house for £117,000, now worth £200,000.

If you'd like to be featured write to: Nic Ciciotti, Stepping Stones, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. £100 for the best story

HOT SPOT
KENNINGTON, SOUTH LONDON

Nice and sleazy does it



Kennington's handsome Georgian housing has always been a lure for politicians due to the area's proximity to Parliament

Charming houses in quaint garden squares at relatively low prices, say the estate agents. Dodgy neighbourhood, says a jockette of our acquaintance who plays one-eyed hockey in the area. Her equipment bag attracts the attention of passers-by, so she keeps one eye on the ball and her other eye on her belongings.

High sleaze and high prices generally don't mix, but a large Victorian or Georgian house in a pleasant square sells in the vicinity of £400,000. A council flat can cost a tenth as much. This is Kennington, an area with gorgeousness thanks to the Duchy of Cornwall Estate, and with grimness courtesy of Adolf Hitler. Not coincidentally, Parliament is just across the Thames.

Over the centuries, the City attracted London's commercial activity, and Westminster attracted royalty. Until a few years ago, the Duchy of Cornwall (in effect, the Prince of Wales) owned hundreds of houses on 45 acres in Kennington, including the nearby Oval cricket ground. Most of these, many of which are handsome Regency and neo-Regency garden-square terraces, have now been sold, primarily to housing associations.

MPs have always had Kennington in their sites because of its proximity to Parliament. Luftwaffe pilots had Parliament literally in their sights, but they missed their target far more often than they hit it, and many of their misadventures found Kennington, thereby

preparing the ground for post-war council construction.

A price tag of £400,000 is good value, says Johnny Male of Daniel Cobb estate agents, in that "equivalent properties in Clapham and on the other side of the river sell for twice the price, or even more." Some three-bedroom houses in the area sell for less than £200,000, and a converted

Victorian school on Kennington Road has yielded large bright flats which have vaulted ceilings.

Few shops and good schools are the area's weak points, although the former is palpably improving. "The area has changed dramatically in the last 10 to 15 years. Kennington used to be virtually all rented," says Mr Male. "Now, with some Duchy of Cornwall

properties for sale, many more homes are owner-occupied. And with that, shops are coming in."

Kennington Park Road, Kennington Lane and Kennington Road intersect to form a small triangle. Prime Kennington is within the three sides and on its borders (such as Denby, Sanicroft and Courtenay Streets).

The council estates dotted through-

out the area vary in age and architecture but still tend to be predominantly council tenanted. As one local agent notes: "Your next-door neighbour can move out and be replaced by the neighbours from hell." These properties appeal to investors and also to owner-occupiers on extremely limited budgets.

ROBERT LIEBMAN

THREE TO VIEW

HOUSES WITH A PAST



IN A previous life, this six-bedroom house in three quarters of an acre would have housed a parson and his large, quite possibly impecunious family. Now the Old Parsonage in Fleckney, near Market Harborough, in Leicestershire, is a private home. It has a conservatory reached via French doors from the music room, lounge and dining rooms with period fireplaces and a family-sized kitchen with fitted oven and hob. A solid-fuel Aga may be bought separately. The ground floor has a boot room, study, workshop and studio with a gallery. The grounds boast a herb garden, greenhouse and paddock. £235,000, details from Frank Innes (01858 410311).



A TABLET on the front of The Old School commemorates its opening as the village school in South Warrborough, Hampshire. The house was originally built for the poor children of the parish, aged seven and above, and finally closed in 1952. With its Grade II listing, it is now a three-bedroom home (two of the bedrooms are on the ground floor with a 19ft drawing room, a study, a dining room and a large kitchen. There is a mezzanine gallery and a master bedroom with en suite facilities on the first floor. The gardens are old and traditional and include a double garage. £275,000 through Hill & Morrison, telephone 01256 702892 for details.



IT HAS been a long time since the forge rang to the sound of the hammer and anvil, as it is now used for storage and garaging, with a vehicle inspection pit. The outbuilding comes with the house, known as The Forge, which is a three-bedroom dwelling with more than an acre and a half of gardens. Built in the early 19th century and Grade II listed, it is the first time that the building has been sold on the open market apart from the Highclere Estate, which is five miles from Newbury, in Berkshire. It has a sitting room with open fireplace, dining room with a wood-burning stove in the hearth and a large, spacious kitchen with a beamed ceiling. The guide price is £290,000. Details are available from Strutt & Parker (01635 521707).

ROSALIND RUSSELL

THE LOW-DOWN

Prices: Three-storey early-Victorian houses can sell for as little as £150,000-£160,000 but, says Johnny Male of Cobb estate agents, in the squares and nice pockets, houses start at £250,000 and "the lowest prices are really creeping toward £300,000". A decent two-bedroom flat costs about £135,000.

Bottom Fishing: Alan Fisher estate

agents sells one-bedroom ex-council flats for less than £50,000, and two- and three-bedroom flats for not much more. They also sell inexpensive split-level maisonettes and shop-flats combined with interesting residential or live/work possibilities.

Transport: If you are anywhere in Kennington, you are near good public transport. Kennington station

(Northern Line, zone 2) is on Kennington Park Road, just down from Elephant and Castle (Bakerloo and Northern Lines, zone 1). Vauxhall Station is nearby, and several bus lines serve the West End.

Ministry of Funny Walks: A plaque marks the house at 287 Kennington Road where Charlie Chaplin lived. It is one of several Chaplin family

residences in Kennington, including 39 Methley Street (through Daniel Cobb for £299,950, also apparently with a Chaplin plaque) and 3 Pownall Terrace, which was destroyed during the Blitz.

A Clarion Call for Clarity: Some Kennington property particulars boast of being within the Division Bell Area, which (says a local estate

agent) means 20 minutes by horse and cart or (says Our Women in Parliament) eight minutes by foot. Council Tax: Kennington falls between two stools: Lambeth exerts £431 for Band A and £1,294 for H, and Southwark insists on £524 and £1,573 respectively.

Estate Agents: Alan Fraser 0171-587 1004; Daniel Cobb 0171-735 9510

TEL: 0171 293 2222

PROPERTY: RESIDENTIAL

FAX: 0171 293 2505

REGENT LETTING LTD
Tel: 0171 916 0313 Fax: 0171 916 1607

LANDLORDS SPECIAL RATES

8%

No Fee To Tenants
8-9 Camden Rd
London NW1 9EA

OSNEY CRESCENT, NW5
Large one bedroom flat in Camden, good size lounge, fitted kitchen. Available in March.
£159pw

FORT HILL ROAD, NW4
One double bedroom flat in Portbury Park, lounge, fitted kitchen. Available now.
£145pw

BRIDGES PLACE, NW1
2 double bedrooms flat in Camden, large separate lounge with fully fitted kitchen and washing machine, available in Feb.
£230pw

SWAIN'S LANE, NE
Two bedrooms flat near transport, large lounge, fitted kitchen, washing machine, available now.
£280pw

BERGHOLT MEWS, NW1
Loudly two bedroom house, double rooms, large separate lounge, fully fitted kitchen with washing machine, available in Feb.
£280pw

LUXBOURGH, W1
Two double bedrooms flat, large lounge, fully fitted kitchen, close to transport, available now.
£300pw

BOYINGS RD, N19
Three double bedrooms flat in Camden, large separate lounge, fully fitted kitchen with washing machine, available now.
£270pw

JURDINE RD, E1
3 x two double bedrooms beautiful luxury apartment in the city overlooking the Thames, fully equipped with all modern conveniences, modern new development, secure off street parking with electric gate. AVAILABLE NOW. MUST BE SEEN!!
£320pw

GLoucester Place, W1
Loudly three bedroom flat in zone 1, fully fitted kitchen with washing machine, two reception rooms, 24 hour porter, can be for four people. Available.
£270pw

ST AUGUSTINES RD, NW1
Beautiful eight bedroom house in a good location with very large lounge, fully fitted kitchen/diner. AVAILABLE NOW. MUST BE SEEN!!
£450pw

To advertise in this section please call the
Property Team on 0171 293 2302.

self building?
renovating?
converting? extending?
...you'll need an
ASBA architect

ASBA, Britain's largest network of architects who specialise in the design of individual homes are ready to help you save money, time and stress.

Design, Planning Advice, Building Regulations, Listed Building Work, Tendering, Project Management and Finance.

aSba
with our help you can build an individual home

members nationwide
freephone 0800 387310

London Property

**Rush hour in
Bartolomew Close, EC1**

SHOW FLAT OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
JUST FOLLOW THESE SIGNS, WE'RE NEXT DOOR

• 3R, 1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments
• Ready for Occupation

PRICES FROM £145,000 TO £299,000

TEL: 0171 407 5669

**MAJOR REGIONAL
PROPERTY AUCTION**
MAINLY BY ORDER OF THE MORTGAGEES
23rd February 1999 - The Swallow Hotel, Bexley
Heath, Surrey at 1pm - 27 Lots

Kent, Essex, Greater London, Surrey, Hertfordshire, Devon, Powys, Berkshire, Hampshire, Swansea, Cardiff, East Sussex, Carmarthenshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Cornwall and Oxfordshire

FOR CATALOGUES PLEASE TELEPHONE 0839 772204

Calls to the number cost 45p a min at all times. For a listed lot the may involve a long call please call the number below for further information.
Office: FF Offices, 19/16 Grove Road South, Southmead PO5 5RD, FOR CATALOGUES
PLEASE TELEPHONE
0839 772204

GA general Accident
Property Services

HURFORD SALVI CARR

**Clerkenwell
EC1
£595,000**

• Spectacular Penthouse
• Shell Finish
• 16'9" Ceiling
• Garage
• 360° Terrace
• 999 Year Lease

0171 250 1012
37-41 ST JOHN ST LONDON EC1M 4AN
FAX: 0171 250 1015

MULBERRY COURT
18 PLUMBERS ROW LONDON E1

**...A PRIME
INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY!**

LUXURY APARTMENTS

9% GROSS RENTAL GUARANTEE FOR 1 YEAR! FROM £115,995

6.49% FIXED 10 YEAR INVESTMENT MORTGAGES

SAT 6th - SUN 7th FEBRUARY '99

CALLIARD HOMES LTD

0171 375 0427

Calliary Court is a preferred name only. Subject to conditions of John Shaw Southern mortgage. Subject to status & lender's special conditions and available as at 22.1.99

Exchange

Herefordshire

HEREFORD

Main front portion Grade II listed Georgian home. Rural location 10 minutes city and excellent local schools. Half hour M5. 4 bedrooms, 3 acres, cellars, outbuildings, garage, pond, woods. oiro £300,000

Tel: 01432 340036

Shropshire

STONE COTTAGE for complete renovation. Lovely views. Cash buyers. Details 01691 774262

Scotland

TO RENT turn. semi detached house in South West Scotland. Vacant mid April. Tel 01256 600454

West Country

CREWKERNE

For details of our traditionally built detached bungalows and houses, all with GCH, priced from £112,950 to £164,950

Please contact
**Charles Bishop Ltd on
01460 73003**

**It's never too late to start
a new life in the sun!**

VILLAS AND APARTMENTS ON MAJLARD SPAIN FROM £21,000 - £300,000+

MORAIJA - CALPE
BENIDORM - JAVEA
DENIA - TORREVEGA
CASTELLON - JALON

PHONE 01793 480033
WILMINGTONS INTERNATIONAL

Overseas Property

BUYING ABROAD?

The Spring overseas property exhibition:
The Cumberland Hotel
Marble Arch, London W1

Friday 12th, Saturday 13th, Sunday 14th February 1999
Friday 1200 - 1800 Sat/Sun 10.00 - 1.00

Over 50 top Agents and Developers from Spain and the Balearics, the Canaries, Gibraltar, Portugal, France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Crete, Florida and the Caribbean will be displaying their properties.

THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY SHOW
FREE Admission
Tel: 01420 520 777
www.tipso.com

France

Modern house in 2,100m² of garden bordering trout river AVRE in hamlet near DREUX, 23hrs from DIEPPE and 1hr from Paris.
3 bedrooms + 1 huge room. Mature garden, fruit trees, patio by the river, with around 150m² of river bank.
£65,000
Tel: 01895 232202

Italy

COMPREHENSIVE house having services for property purchasers in Umbria. From apartments to castles. All negotiations in English. For details Tel: 0171 293 2302

Spain

COSTA BLANCA Los Alcazares. Top quality new villas and apartments for sale from £135k. For brochure and video contact the UK sole agents Rockwell Villa Sales. Inspection trips arranged. (UK) Tel/Fax 01793 513488 or 013466 175048 (Pw:013466@compuserve.com)